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## The Political Economy of Education Systems in Conflict-Affected Contexts

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## Abbreviations

CAFS	Conflict-affected fragile states
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EFA	Education For All
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Overseas development assistance
PE	Political economy
VAR	Validity, applicability, reliability

## Executive summary

This report is a rigorous literature review on the political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts and is aimed at education advisers and agencies, development practitioners and Ministry of Education policy makers working in conflict-affected contexts. The report seeks to provide theoretically informed and policy relevant insights on the global, national and local governance of education systems in conflict-affected contexts garnered from a rigorous review of the academic and policy literature on the political economy of education in conflict-affected contexts. In the education sector in developing contexts, there is a strong recognition of the important role that political economy analysis might play in better understanding and addressing the obstacles to achieving the Education for All objectives agreed in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and the educational Millennium Development Goals. These challenges are undoubtedly most acute in countries affected by conflicts. Children in these countries are three times less likely to attend primary school than children living in non-conflict contexts, and these inequalities persist throughout all levels of education. Furthermore, there are also serious governance and capacity deficits in conflict-affected contexts that make educational reform more challenging and make providing and administering international development assistance more complex and problematic.

### Review questions and methodology

The review is driven by three main questions: 1) What are the underpinning assumptions of the main bodies of political economy research in education and conflict? 2) What can the political economy of education literature since 1990 inform us about educational change and reform in conflict-affected contexts? 3) What are the strengths, weaknesses, blind spots and research gaps in the political economy of education literature exploring the governance of educational change and reform in conflict-affected contexts? Our review methodology combined purposive sampling with systematic review methods, with a view to developing a narrative synthesis of the qualitative evidence from a body of literature that is heterogeneous in terms of methods used and issues addressed. The full methodological process is outlined in Chapter 3 of the main report, while a critical analysis of the characteristics and quality of the literature reviewed is provided in Chapter 4.

### Theoretical framework: political economy insights and assumptions

In Chapter 2 of the report, we try to answer our first review question:

*What are the underpinning assumptions of the main bodies of political economy research on education in conflict-affected contexts?*

In answering this we developed a theoretical framework for our political economy analysis by reviewing foundational thinking in political economy, the political economy of education and development and the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding. What we begin to unravel is a highly diverse set of literatures, focusing on different themes, drawing on distinct theoretical and ideological underpinnings, and using conceptualisations of political economy ranging from a very narrow neoclassical approach that appears interested in political factors only in so much as they constitute ‘distortions’ or ‘externalities’ that inhibit market performance, to a very broad ‘cultural political economy’ which seeks to explore economic issues in relation to geography, gender, culture and politics. Cutting through the different areas of focus are also divisions between orthodox and critical political economy approaches, which have very different normative assumptions on social change, social justice and equity. In all approaches, there is an attempt to reduce the complexity of social reality, but the degree to which it is

reduced is highly divergent. There is also a strong sense that while orthodox political economy is much better at providing simplified policy solutions - whether that be 'the stages of development' or the 'Washington Consensus' - its recipes do not necessarily produce the intended outcomes. Conversely, critical political economy appears to be more effective at unpacking the tensions, contradictions and inequalities in everyday life and in education systems - analysing what policies work or not and for whom - but appears less useful in offering easy policy solutions.

The findings from the rigorous literature review presented in the subsequent sections of the report were informed by the political economy (PE) insights garnered from the above critique and crystallised into a set of theoretical and methodological assumptions. Firstly, PE is an array of approaches, from a very narrow neoclassical/new institutionalism (Grindle, 2004) to a broad cultural political economy of education (Robertson 2012) and spans a range of disciplines. Secondly, research in the field of education and conflict has historical roots linked to these foundational ideas in political economy, development theory, conflict theories and educational research - explicitly and implicitly. Thirdly, educational policies and interventions are underpinned by political and economic interests and preferences that political economy analysis can unpack. Fourthly, education does not exist in isolation from broader social issues and processes, which affect policy interventions and shape content and outcomes in conflict-affected contexts. Fifthly, policy environments are dynamic, with structures, agents and institutions in various degrees of flux, and where policies both affect and are affected by the relationships between these different structures, institutions and agents. Sixthly, political economy analysis can explore all moments of the policy cycle, including agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation - not just 'obstacles to policy implementation'. It also addresses significant issues that affect both the quality and outcomes of policy choices, including who decides on policy, and what are the likely distributional effects of policy and for whom (winners and losers). Seventhly, research needs to go beyond 'methodological nationalism' (that presumes problems begin and end in the nation state), but equally avoid 'methodological globalism' (that over-privileges global actors and factors). Eighthly, we need to take culture seriously, moving beyond both ethnocentrism and economism and explore issues of religion, nationalism, identities, knowledge and values.

### **Detailed summary of findings by stages of the policy cycle**

This report summarised the findings from the literature on the political economy of education in conflict-affected contexts in relation to the three stages of the policy cycle: policy agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation.

#### *The political economy of agenda setting*

In this section we explored the political economy actors and factors that education policy makers working in conflict-affected contexts might reflect upon in order to develop a better understanding of the available policy options and enhance their abilities to engage in and influence the process of agenda setting. In this phase of the policy cycle, political economy literature can provide us with a sense of two macro-level issues: 1) the factors that shape global funding priorities for interventions in the areas of education, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and security fields; and 2) the key global actors and issues that condition the priorities and frame debate on education in conflict-affected contexts. Analysing the different mandates and agendas of international actors, the literature highlights a range of important tensions that assist in understanding education's challenges in conflict contexts.

Firstly, although education has firm and established recognition in international development strategy, it makes weaker inroads into the agenda-setting process compared



to both the humanitarian aid and security sectors. In conflict-affected contexts it is precisely these two sectors that tend to dominate, leading to relative marginalisation of the education sector. Secondly, and beyond the question of mandate and expertise, there are also issues related to power. The security sector links powerful military and foreign office actors with distinct agendas and interests that often out-trump the development and humanitarian actors in both national domestic politics and international activities. This has led to the privileging of a 'security first' approach to conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, which overlooks the potential effects of poor and discriminatory education provision on conflicts as well as institutional quality in the first place. Thirdly, while education has clearly been marginalised in the 'security first' approach to post-conflict reconstruction, this is being challenged. Central to this challenge is that this agenda, while having some success in maintaining a negative peace (the absence of war), appears to be less successful in addressing some of the more structural inequalities that underpin the resentment and anger that can fuel conflict. Issues around economic and social justice are central to these arguments, and improving education provision appears as a key demand. Thus there is some scope for leveraging funds if education actors are better able to demonstrate both the short- and long-term benefits of education's role in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. However, there are also dangers in leveraging funds from the security sector in that this might shift education programming towards more short-term and security-oriented interventions at the expense of long-term planning with more transformatory potential. Fourthly, the evidence points towards education sector specialists being absent from the table at broader UN and international peacebuilding co-ordination processes, which reinforces the sector's marginalisation. Finally, if education researchers and practitioners are not aware of the bigger picture beyond the particularities of delivering education in conflict and post-conflict situations, or avoid addressing them for political expediency, they may unwittingly become auxiliaries of powerful players with very different agendas.

### *The political economy of policy formulation*

Policy formulation is the second stage of the policy process and involves the proposal of solutions to the issues already on the agenda. The literature reviewed provides some insights into the political economy factors that should be taken into account by global and national actors responsible for educational policy formulation in conflict-affected contexts. Political economy analysis can help these actors to better understand what are the most effective and feasible educational policies in these contexts. It can also serve to establish the necessary conditions for these policies to be accepted by legitimate decision-making bodies and major stakeholders in education. The literature identifies a certain level of disconnection between; on the one hand, a quite generic globally structured educational agenda designed by donors and global actors, and on the other, the political economy factors that are shaping educational provision in conflict-affected contexts. This disjunction is undermining the effectiveness of the reforms and the achievement of educational and peacebuilding goals, especially in relation to addressing issues to do with social justice.

Lessons garnered from the literature indicate how educational policy formulation could be more effective and legitimate in conflict-affected contexts. Firstly, effective educational interventions should be informed by an understanding of the political roots of conflict and not just by the technical definition of policy goals. This technical definition of education goals around issues such as access and quality does not help to identify and engage with the problems that constitute the social and educational causes of conflict such as economic and political exclusion, linguistic repression and discrimination. Secondly, policy formulation should give priority to equity over efficiency concerns in the design and selection of interventions and reforms because the lack of attention to educational and socio-political inequities can create the possibility of a renewed outbreak of conflict.



Literature reviewed shows how efficiency-driven decentralisation reforms supported by the World Bank both in Nepal and Central America failed to improve the educational situation of poor people, worsened the working conditions of teachers and increased social inequalities between communities and schools. Thirdly, policy formulation should also go beyond the rights-based approach that dominates the Education for All and Millennium Development Goal agenda. The latter should adopt a systemic and multisectoral approach and factor in the removal of economic and political barriers as necessary conditions for the realisation of these rights. The prioritisation of universal primary education is a clear example of how the narrow understanding of development goals is favouring the privatisation of post-primary education and the increase of educational inequalities. Fragmented and isolated educational interventions cannot become triggers of social change and national unity if they are not part of a more systemic strategy. Fourthly, legitimate educational interventions should not be imposed on recipient countries through aid conditionality and should encourage the adoption and ownership of policy reforms that are effective in enhancing educational outcomes and contributing to peacebuilding at the same time. Countries subjected to structural adjustment programmes have adopted the global education policy menu and have been forced to comply with international frameworks of action. Finally, national ownership and legitimacy of policy formulation are necessary conditions for a successful adoption and implementation of the reforms. These reforms should focus on long-term objectives and contribute to state building and capacity development in the decision making process.

### *The political economy of policy implementation*

This section provides an analysis of the political economy factors that mediate and condition the implementation of education interventions in conflict-affected contexts. The studies provide practical insights into the national, context-specific processes - cultural, political, social - within which global policy prescriptions play out. In exploring how educational interventions intersect with political economy contexts, they offer a range of useful messages related to unintended consequences, the success of initiatives in relation to peacebuilding aims, and the potential of programming effectiveness to be enhanced by greater responsiveness to context, including strategic attention to persistent drivers of conflict. Despite heterogeneity in methods and focus, the political economy analysis reflects a convergent critique of educationist approaches that disembed educational policy making and provision from the structures and power dynamics underpinned by the political economy of the conflict-affected contexts.

Firstly, failure to locate the implementation of educational interventions within distinctive cultural, social, religious and political contexts can undermine effectiveness in achieving aims, and may result in unintended consequences that jeopardise the capacity of education to be a vehicle for peacebuilding. Insufficient attention to these contextual factors is a reiterated message across the rich and diverse body of country-specific research reviewed in this section, which investigates the implementation of policies and programmes focusing on gender inequities, disability, curricula reform, teacher policies and management, social cohesion and nation building. Studies of interventions within complex contexts in which the Islamic faith is a key component of collective and individual identities also draw similar conclusions, with important practical consequences for strategies to leverage change.

Secondly, engagement with the intersection of educational interventions with cultural values and socio-political contexts can greatly enhance the potential of education to achieve peacebuilding objectives and contribute to social transformation in post-conflict settings. This is the key to avoiding a narrowly 'educationist' approach in strategising for policy implementation. Operationalising a more expansive vision of the role of education within peacebuilding has important strategic implementations for the design logics of interventions: making an impact on the drivers of conflict necessitates locating

educational reform carefully - and intersectorally - in relation to addressing structural grievances arising from a range of social, political and economic exclusions.

Thirdly, attention to the contextual constraints, identity, voices and expectations of local agents and constituencies that go beyond state-centric and education-sector centred approaches are necessary to inform context-sensitive implementation. This necessitates developing constructive, genuinely participatory dialogue with a range of groups whose identities and relation to the processes of peacebuilding coalesce around their religion, ethnicity and lives within local communities.

Fourthly, the effectiveness of interventions depends on building into decision making an awareness of the context-specific political and cultural dynamics into which programmes and policies arrive and take root. Recognition of the need to locate educational interventions within complex, often highly politicised power relationships can prevent unintended and often counterproductive results that may contribute to the reproduction of social injustices that run counter to peacebuilding.

While the existing research provides useful insights into the core policy problems, the obstacles and opportunities, and the desired policy destination for education systems in conflict-affected contexts, there remains a large range of important issues that need to be researched more systematically, which we highlight at the end of the report. We have grouped these in relation to 10 key policy disjunctures/challenges that emerged out of the review and require careful attention:

1. The global security/peacebuilding agenda marginalises or undermines the potential of education to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding.
2. There is a disconnect between peacebuilding and conflict practitioners and education specialists; both groups lack knowledge of each other's fields, leading to silo approaches and missed opportunities.
3. There is a disconnect between actors in the humanitarian, development and security sectors, all of which have different approaches to the role of education.
4. There is a disjunction between a global educational agenda influenced by access/quality/efficiency and the peacebuilding needs of conflict-affected societies, e.g. addressing inequity, social cohesion, and economic and political exclusion.
5. The framing of educational interventions in narrowly educationist technical terms that bypass the cultural, political, religious and social contexts of implementation can undermine effectiveness in achieving sustainable peacebuilding aims, and may jeopardise the capacity of education to contribute to peacebuilding.
6. Lack of cross-sector collaboration between the education departments within government and other agencies prevents leveraging change on key cross-cutting issues linked to peacebuilding.
7. Inattention to agency and voices of national/local actors undermines the possibility of sustainable outcomes and of addressing conflict-related social justice issues.
8. Imbalances of power between global, national and local actors undermine the potential for local ownership of interventions and therefore opportunities for sustainable peacebuilding.
9. A disjuncture between different types of political economy analysis results in different evaluations of the significance of global and local actors, and local political and cultural contexts.
10. The complexity of factors influencing the success of educational interventions revealed by political economy analysis is difficult for practitioners to address and to use to inform policies and programming. However, failure to do so is likely to undermine technical solutions.

# 1. Introduction, aims and rationale for the review

This report is a rigorous literature review on the political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts and is aimed at education advisers and agencies, development practitioners, and Ministry of Education policy makers working in conflict-affected contexts. It is also aimed at the broader education and conflict community of research and practice linked to the Inter-Agency Network of Education in Emergencies (INEE). The report seeks to provide theoretically informed and policy-relevant insights on the global, national and local governance of education systems in conflict-affected contexts. These insights have been garnered from a rigorous review of the academic and policy literature on the political economy of education in conflict-affected contexts.<sup>1</sup> While the literature in this area is nascent, fragmented and partial, we believe that it: provides rich and complex insights into the challenges of improving education systems in conflict-affected contexts; demonstrates the embedded nature of education systems and actors within local, national and global political economies; and provides policy relevant signposts that can assist practitioners working in these difficult contexts.

In the remainder of this chapter, we outline the rationale and aims of the review. In Chapter 2, we describe the theoretical and conceptual framework and present the framing of the key issues under review, and in Chapter 3, we outline the review methodology. Chapter 4 presents the main characteristics and an assessment of the quality of the studies selected for the in-depth review, and in Chapter 5, we discuss the review's main findings. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the study, outlines a theory of change that emerges from the findings and draws out the policy insights and research gaps for future study.

Interest in the political economy of development has resurfaced over recent decades in response to two key factors. Firstly, there was recognition that 'institutions' and 'good governance' are significant determinants of growth and that while getting markets right was an important component of development policy, alone it was insufficient to promote sustainable growth (North, 1990; Stiglitz, 1998; World Bank 1997). Secondly, development partners recognised that programmes were failing to deliver, not just because of technical flaws, but also due to the particular ways they interacted with formal and informal institutions, customs and local practices (Leftwich, 2005). Both developments made the relationship between 'politics' and 'economics' a crucial issue for policy design, and led to an appreciation of the role and potential of political economy analysis to support programming and sector reform in development contexts (DFID, 2004; 2009). The interest in political economy increased as more development assistance was allocated to conflict-affected states, where the relationships between state failure and economic collapse were all the more evident (DFID, 2006), and where governance challenges were more acute (DFID, 2010), making the need for political economy analysis more urgent (Putzel and DiJohn, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, we largely use the term conflict-affected contexts to refer to those contexts that have undergone violent civil conflict and/or war in the last two decades. We find this a more neutral terminology than 'fragile' states, 'fragility', or 'weak' states, which are regularly used to describe conflict-affected contexts in the broader literature that we draw upon. On occasions in the text we use 'fragile' and 'fragility' when we feel that it better captures the authors' meaning in the particular text under review. We also prefer to use 'contexts' rather than 'states', as in several cases, the conflicts do not necessarily correspond to the entire state territory e.g. Northern Uganda, and may cross several borders (Kurdish conflict). We also draw upon the phrase 'post-conflict contexts' when appropriate.

## 1. Introduction, aims and rationale for the review

In the education sector in developing contexts, there is a strong recognition of the important role that political economy analysis might play in better understanding and addressing the obstacles to achieving the Education For All (EFA) objectives agreed in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and the educational Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Little, 2010). While the global number of out-of-school children fell from 60 million in 2008 to 57 million in 2011 (UNESCO, 2013), and there are now 610 million children in developing countries enrolled in primary schools, more than ever before (United Nations, 2013); there still remain great educational challenges both in terms of access and the quality of that provision.

These challenges are undoubtedly most acute in those countries affected by conflicts (UNESCO, 2011). Children in these countries make up 22 percent of the world's primary school-aged population, yet comprise 50 percent of those denied an education, a proportion that has increased from 42 percent in 2008 (UNESCO, 2013). They are three times less likely to attend school than children living in non-conflict contexts (World Bank, 2011) and are far more likely to drop out of primary school before reaching the last grade: 35 percent in conflict-affected contexts versus 14 percent in non-conflict low-income contexts. Of the 28.5 million primary school children that are out of school, almost 95 percent live in low- and lower-middle-income countries, so the issue of conflict is also one of poverty (UNESCO, 2013). The primary education problem in turn leads to lower secondary school enrolment in conflict-affected contexts, which is more than a third less than the low-income context norm (UNESCO, 2011). Of the 69 million adolescents of lower secondary school age who were not in school, 20 million lived in conflict-affected states in 2011, of which 11 million were female (UNESCO, 2013). Furthermore, there are also serious governance and capacity deficits in conflict-affected contexts that make educational reform more challenging and make providing and administering international development assistance more complex and problematic (UNESCO, 2011).

Since 2000, both the recognition of the importance of working in conflict-affected contexts and the increasing evidence of the effects of conflict on educational access and quality have increased funding in the sector. It has also led to an interest in understanding the particularities of the educational challenges faced in these contexts, and to a growing recognition that policy makers, donors and practitioners working in the education sector in conflict-affected contexts are faced with huge challenges requiring new and innovative ways of funding, governance and evaluating education policy interventions (Davies, 2009).

As a result of this rising interest, the literature on education and conflict has expanded greatly over the last decade (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Smith and Vaux, 2003; Davies, 2004; Novelli and Lopes-Cardozo, 2008) and this can be roughly categorised into three major areas of inquiry.

The first is the effect of conflict on education. Work in this area explores the cost (both in terms of human lives and of infrastructure) that war and conflict can inflict on educational opportunities, actors and institutions. Recently there has been notable work to monitor this more systematically through a series of UNESCO-funded publications (O'Malley 2007; O'Malley 2010; UNESCO 2010). This work demonstrates the variety of ways that educational opportunities, actors and institutions can be negatively affected by conflict, e.g., attacks on schools, students and teachers; sexual violence against schoolchildren and teachers; forced recruitment of teachers and children; and the occupation of school buildings by warring factions. Recent developments have included the creation of the Global Coalition for the Protection of Education from Attack (GCPEA), which brings together a range of development and human rights organisations working on research and advocacy on this issue. This has led to an increased research on the motivations and effects of attacks on education systems.

The second major area of research inquiry has been to explore the way education, depending on its nature, content and delivery, can be both catalyst of and obstacle to

conflict. Davies (2004) demonstrated the complex ways that education can serve as a catalyst of conflict through educational policies and practices that exclude or humiliate minorities, exacerbate class and gender differences and indoctrinate students through a war or hate curriculum. Similarly, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) provided a range of examples of different forms of violence in education: the uneven distribution of education and educational opportunities (Kosovo, Sri Lanka, Rwanda); education as a weapon of cultural repression (Kurdish students denied the right to speak in their mother tongue in schools in Turkey); denial of education as a weapon of war (closure of Palestinian schools by Israel); manipulation of history for political purposes (Nazis rewriting German history); the manipulation of textbooks (Sri Lankan textbooks in 1970s and 1980s declared Tamils as the historic enemy of the Sinhalese); the conveying of images asserting the superiority of one group over another (South Africa under apartheid conveyed the black population as inferior to white); and segregated education (South Africa and in large parts of Sri Lanka).

Conversely, there are also longstanding literatures that promote the power of education as a tool for peaceful co-existence. Education is often cited as a mechanism for peace building, human rights promotion and the defence and protection of democracy (UNESCO 1998; Uwazie 2003; Kaur 2006; Bekerman and McGlynn 2007; McGlynn 2009). Davies (2004, 2005) similarly refers to a wide range of inspiring examples of schools that have been resilient to the conflict around them, in countries such as Lebanon, Uganda, Bosnia, Nepal and Liberia. This dualistic potential of education to promote both justice and injustice has led to an increased interest in going beyond mere educational access towards understandings of content and curriculum and the governance of education systems (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000, Novelli and Smith, 2011). These literatures go beyond advocacy for access to education for conflict-affected children raising in addition issues relating to the quality of the education provided, in terms of curriculum content, teachers' attitudes and policy issues.

Thirdly, there is a burgeoning policy literature relating to the governance and policy of delivering education in conflict and post-conflict zones which comprises of toolkits, minimum standards guidelines and working papers that seek to guide and spread good educational practice in countries affected by conflict and for international agencies that fund, co-ordinate and deliver educational services in these regions.<sup>2</sup> Recently, many of the agencies involved have begun to recognise the need and importance of political economy analysis of the education system in conflict-affected states and have commissioned studies relating to this (DFID; EU, CFBT; UNICEF, USAID), both in terms of political economy literature reviews, case studies of particular countries, and the production of political economy tools for the education sector in conflict-affected states to ensure the conflict-sensitive and/or peacebuilding potential of education. This expanding work has serviced the policy needs of the agencies involved in expanding service delivery in conflict-affected states, and their attempts to grapple with the many challenges of promoting sustainable educational change in difficult contexts. Its growth also reflects the rise of interest in the field more generally. In many ways, it is this third area that has driven a resurgence of interest in the former two, and has led to the emergence of an intellectual sub-field within international comparative education and development, which while relatively new, has risen in prominence in international education journals and conferences.

Whilst this practitioner-linked education research has grown, there has been a relative absence of critically informed research (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Novelli, 2010), and little has been written which synthesises the particular insights and lessons that can be derived from those research products that have grappled with political economy issues, either explicitly or implicitly. Furthermore, policy makers still face major challenges, and there remain several research gaps that hinder informed policy debate and decision

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<sup>2</sup> See the INEE website: <http://www.ineesite.org/en/>

## 1. Introduction, aims and rationale for the review

making. In order to identify and fill in these gaps, and to better inform the education work of DFID in conflict-affected contexts, the specific purposes of this review are:

- to prepare a conceptual and theoretical framework on the political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts
- to undertake a rigorous literature review of existing evidence on the political economy of education change and reform in conflict-affected contexts
- to analyse the implications of political economy research on education for policy and practice in conflict-affected contexts
- to develop a theory of change for better understanding the political economy challenges of educational change and reform in conflict-affected contexts.

The review of the literature is driven by three main review questions. These can be broken down further into secondary questions:

1. What are the underpinning assumptions of the main bodies of political economy research on education in conflict-affected contexts?
  - a. How have the canons/foundational thinkers in political economy shaped the theoretical approaches of the literature on education in conflict-affected contexts?
  - b. What are the specific debates and assumptions of the political economy of development in conflict-affected contexts?
  - c. What has been the role of the education sector in the political economy analysis of development in conflict-affected contexts?
2. What can the political economy of education literature since 1990 inform us about educational change and reform in conflict-affected contexts?
  - a. How does the quality of the governance mechanisms and institutions alter the effectiveness of educational policies and reforms in conflict-affected contexts?
  - b. What are the main political economy factors that shape agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation of educational reforms in conflict-affected contexts?
3. What are the strengths, weaknesses, blind spots and research gaps in the political economy of education literature exploring the governance of educational change and reform in conflict-affected contexts?
  - a. What is the quantity and quality of the political economy research on educational change in conflict-affected contexts?
  - b. What educational processes of change in conflict-affected contexts have not attracted the attention or have not been properly addressed by the political economy literature?
  - c. What have been the main contributions of the political economy literature to the debates on education and development in conflict-affected contexts?

In the next chapter, we begin to lay out the theoretical framework for this work.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter presents a theoretical framework for the analysis of the political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts. The first part provides a definition and a very brief summary of the intellectual roots, assumptions, strengths and weakness of the political economy traditions (2.1). This is followed by an overview of the key approaches and debates on the political economy of education and development (2.2) and the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding (2.3). Finally, the fourth part presents the insights that can be distilled from the political economy analysis of education systems in conflict-affected contexts (2.4).

### 2.1 The political economy traditions

The political economy approach to social research is an amalgam of competing perspectives which are both overlapping and divided at the same time. To be inclusive, we define political economy as the study of how the relationships between individuals and society and between markets and the state affect the production, distribution and consumption of resources, paying attention to power asymmetries and using a diverse set of concepts and methods drawn from economics, political science and sociology.

**Classical Political Economy** emerged as a reaction to mercantilism in the mid-18th century. Adam Smith (1723-90), David Hume (1711-76) and the French economist François Quesnay (1694-1774) explained the uneven distribution of wealth and power by reference to political, economic, and social factors and the complex interactions between them. The classical political economy tradition was maintained in the 19th century by David Ricardo (1772-1823), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), James Mill (1773-1836) and his son John Stuart Mill (1806-73).

The classical political economists emphasised the role of individuals over that of the state. According to Adam Smith, interactions between self-interested individuals are more effective in advancing social welfare compared to state interventions. Nevertheless, they also pay attention to power relations and the role of institutions such as the rule of law and democracy. This was most evident in John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, where he differentiated between production and distribution and argued that the distribution of wealth was determined by power asymmetries between the elites and the working classes. For Mill, it was necessary to instigate reforms and develop institutions that would reduce power asymmetries in society, including new rights for women, the establishment of co-operative societies and the abolition of slavery. The interplay between economic and political factors was also evident even in Adam Smith who, in his *Wealth of Nations*, stated that 'commerce and manufactures can seldom flourish in any state ... in which there is not a certain degree of confidence in the justice of government'.

Nevertheless, the individual-centred method (methodological individualism) of this pioneering work did not go unchallenged. For example, Friedrich List (1789-1846) demonstrated why national borders and national interests are important factors in the analysis of international trade, and criticised Smith's 'cosmopolitical' approach for overlooking these issues. Furthermore, Karl Marx (1818-83) proposed a class-based analysis of political economy, with two main criticisms of his predecessors: (i) lack of an historical (hence dynamic) approach to how market relations have evolved and are evolving into the future; and (ii) overlooking the effects of class conflicts not only on the production and distribution of surplus value, but also on the sustainability of the capitalist mode of production itself.

**The Neoclassical reaction** to the political economy tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries was formulated in William Stanley Jevons' *Theory of Political Economy* (1871), Carl Menger's *Principles of Economics* (1871) and Léon Walras' *Elements of Pure Economics*



(1874-1877). Thanks to Alfred Marshall's contribution in his *Principles of Economics* (1890), the reaction came to be known as the 'marginalist revolution' because of its emphasis on marginal utility that economic agents (firms, consumers, workers, etc.) try to maximise, subject to income, wealth or cost constraints. Neoclassical economists take the social and political contexts as given and reject the notion of evolutionary approaches to economics in particular and social sciences in general. Instead, they focus on the instrumental rationality of the economic agents, methodological individualism, economic self-interest and equilibrium analysis. They are criticised for having a normative bias in favour of analytically constructed optimal equilibrium outcomes, instead of analysing whether and to what extent the actual equilibrium may be distorted by power or information asymmetries between economic agents or by poor-quality institutions that may reproduce such asymmetries. Despite such criticism, neoclassical analysis came to dominate policy advice in international development, particularly during the so-called Washington Consensus of the 1980s and 1990s, when market-oriented reforms were advocated as the only cure for market and government failures.

Three aspects of the neoclassical approach were conducive to high-level uptake of its policy recommendations. First, the policy advice is blind to distributional consequences of market-oriented reforms as long as the latter are conducive to improvement in welfare under restrictive assumptions of perfect information and competition. Secondly, it conveniently assumes away the difficulties and potential loss of welfare that may arise when policy makers introduce policies aimed at moving the economy from a second-best (sub-optimal) equilibrium to an efficient first-best equilibrium. Third, the neoclassical approach rightly points out the sub-optimal consequences of rent-seeking behaviour at the micro and macro levels but does not provide a satisfactory explanation as to why 'rational' economic actors persist in rent-seeking behaviour that is not sustainable in the long run and produces sub-optimal outcomes for all in the short run. A careful examination of these aspects reveals that the appeal of neoclassical policy advice for policy makers may be due to its tendency to underestimate the downside risk of market-oriented reforms and overestimate the returns on such reforms at the same time.

The influence of neoclassical political economy on development policy advice should not detract attention from the fact that it has been challenged by at least two other political economy traditions. Of these, the **Institutional Political Economy** tradition has its roots in the work of John Locke (1632-1704), Montesquieu (1689-1755) and James Madison (1751-1836) on the specificity and historical evolution of institutions and their importance in governing economic and political life. In the second half of the 20th century, scholars such as Barrington Moore (*Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*), Samuel Huntington (*Political Order in Changing Societies*) and Theda Skocpol (*States and Social Revolutions*) have addressed issues of development from an institutional perspective. The institutional approach challenges the ahistorical nature of neoclassical political economy assumptions by exploring how institutions (both formal and informal) frame individual behaviour and affect economic and political outcomes.

In the early 1990s, Douglas North's work (1990, 1994) inspired a large volume of empirical studies that investigated the relationship between institutional quality and economic performance (for a review, see Ugur and Sunderland, 2011). Institutional political economists argued that getting markets right was a necessary but insufficient condition to achieve economic growth. It was also necessary to have appropriate institutions that would promote productive instead of rent-seeking activities. In the absence of appropriate regulation, conflict resolution and stabilisation institutions, the expansion of market relations can produce either recurrent crises or reproduce existing power asymmetries, with adverse consequences for sustainable development (Rodrik, 2000; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006).

The institutional political economy perspective sheds light on two further blind spots in the neoclassical policy advice: the role of uncertainty and the distributional consequences of policy reforms. For example, Fernandez and Rodrik (1991) demonstrate that resistance to policy reform may be due to uncertainty about distribution of the benefits of the intended reforms between different groups, rather than the rent-seeking behaviour that the neoclassical policy advice identifies as the chief obstacle to reforms. Hence, the adoption and success of policy reforms depend on the extent to which governments can come up with compensation packages that address distributional conflicts. Such packages, as Wei (1997) has demonstrated, may be necessary to strengthen the legitimacy of the reforms through building constituent support.

Taking into account the wider institutional context, Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) provide further insights. For example, policies that seek to reduce rent seeking can reduce the economic rents for those groups that are already weak, exacerbating the uneven nature of the balance of power in a society. Even if the policy does not change the distribution of rents, it can change the distribution of income and thereby affect the distribution of power. In this case, policy reform can enhance efficiency, but it can also create new political tensions and frictions that threaten the long-run sustainability of the efficiency gains.

The second challenge came from **Marxist and Critical Political Economy** traditions. Marxist scholarship critiques the development of capitalism and the unequal power relations between social classes. It sheds lights on issues such as imperialism and war, social inequality and injustice, and the relationships between state, capital and civil society. On the other hand, the critical political economy tradition is broader. It includes Marxist political economy, but also provides a home for feminist, post-structuralist and post-colonial critiques of contemporary capitalist development. This broad body of work explores issues such as the gendered nature of contemporary political economy relationships, the role of culture and identity in the production, distribution and consumption of resources, and issues of race, colonialism and ethnicity.

Several aspects of the Marxist and critical political economy literature are relevant for policy debate. First, the work in these traditions tends to consider the historical and institutional context of the issues at hand, including the fragility or resilience of the socio-economic system. Secondly, it takes into account the class power and distinct group interests involved. Thirdly, it encourages deconstructing concepts and received wisdom by drawing attention to possible relationships between arguments, ideology and group/class interests. Finally, it draws attention to distributional issues, which are usually linked to and reproduce existing social relationships.

Both the institutional and Marxist/critical political economy traditions challenge analysts and policy makers to consider the role of a wide range of economic and political factors in the policy process. Despite this strength, however, their appeal for policy advice and implementation may be limited by two factors. First, the existing institutions (or capitalism itself) may result endogenously from interaction between groups with diverging interests - i.e., the current context may reflect an equilibrium that is difficult to change. Secondly, even if institutional change or a new mode of production is possible, there is little or highly fragmented information about what determines the pace of change and how. Therefore, the reaction to neoclassical political economy (or 'vulgar political economy' in Marx's own words) can provide deeper insights into what policies work and for whom. But unlike the neoclassical tradition, they are less suitable for devising a set of 'best-practice' policies applicable in all contexts. This is not necessarily a weakness in terms of rigour, but it reduces the chance of uptake by international and national policy makers who seek 'best-practice' recipes rather than a long lists of caveats.

### 2.2 The political economy of education and development

The broad-brush summary above is useful only as an exercise in highlighting the intellectual roots of the political economy approaches to development in the post-war period. In what follows, we summarise the assumptions and policy implications of this literature, starting with **Modernisation Theory**, which informed the policy advice of international organisations and Western governments from the early 1960s onwards. As articulated by WW Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960), modernisation theory follows in the steps of the neoclassical tradition by deriving a set of prescriptive policies that would enable less-developed countries to 'take off' and catch up with their developed counterparts. Rostow's theory embraced a linear view of history, with the Western and particularly US model as the ultimate example and destination.

It was both a theory and a prescription that had significant implications for educational policy (Dale, 1982). A body of work in this tradition focused on culture and politics and the need for inculcating the 'right values' or developing the 'right skills' necessary for the success of a market-based economic system (Harbison and Myers, 1964; Coleman and Azrael, 1965). For Inkeles and Smith (1974), education plays a central role by creating 'modern' individuals, while Harbison and Myers (1964: 3) suggested that education was 'the key that unlocks the door to modernization'. For Coleman and Azrael (1965), education was fundamental in the development of the 'necessary' technical and cultural skills needed for economic development, while a mass education system itself was a key pillar of a 'developed' society.

In its approach to education, modernisation theory overlaps with the **human capital approach to education** (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964). The central premise of the human capital approach is that investment in education is a key driver of economic growth (Schultz, 1961, Denison, 1962, 1967, Becker, 1964). The relationship between education and growth plays an important role in justifying much of the activity of the World Bank (Jones, 1992; Klees, 2002; Jones and Coleman, 2005) and the OECD (Henry et al., 2001) in the education sector. As Schultz put it; 'knowledge and skill are in great part the product of investment and, combined with other human investment, predominantly account for the productive superiority of the technically advanced countries' (1961:3). If low-income nations followed these prescriptions, they too could enjoy the living standards of the 'advanced' societies. The West's role in this process was to 'help' low-income countries through aid and technical expertise. The paradigm of manpower planning was one major means through which educational planners attempted to design the architecture of education, based on projections of future national skill needs (see Harbison and Meyers, 1964; Blaug, 1968, 1969). Manpower planning fitted in well with the modernisation paradigm and the notion that one could predict future needs, despite early critiques of its efficiency, accuracy and narrow understanding of the role of education (World Bank, 1993).

There are two major critiques of the modernisation approach to development and education. First, its conceptualisation of culture was, as Escobar (1995: 44) notes, the product of a deeply ethnocentric understanding of history that saw non-Western culture as 'a residual variable, to disappear with the advance of modernization'. Secondly, and related to the first, they presented the major obstacles to development as being located within national boundaries and within the particular nation's socio-economic and political practices. There was little appreciation of any external obstacles to national economic development that may be caused by the highly unequal global world order. These critiques also extend to the 'education' modernisation theorists who often treated indigenous culture as a problem rather than resource, saw Western education models as unproblematic solutions to southern problems, and were blind to the way the highly

unequal global economy and polity might undermine national educational independence and development in low-income post-colonial environments.

**Dependency Theory** emerged as a direct challenge to modernisation theory. It raised critical questions about the relationship between national state development and the international capitalist economy (Frank, 1971; Rodney 1972; Amin, 1976). Where modernisation theory emphasised the role of 'internal' obstacles to 'development', dependency theory focused on 'external factors'. According to this theory, Western advanced countries had 'developed' not merely through the wise use of internal resources and education (as suggested by Schultz and Becker), but on the back of slavery and colonial exploitation. While varied in their emphasis, the central focus of dependency theories lay in the unequal power relations within the world economy which forced 'low-income societies' and peoples into particular and subservient roles and kept them there (exporters of primary raw materials, low paid labour and so on).

The work on education informed by dependency theory viewed educational structures and content as the means by which the centre (developed countries) exercised control over the periphery (less-developed countries), reproducing the conditions for the centre's survival and advancement. This control operated not only in obvious ways (military power), but also more subtly through education systems (Carnoy, 1974; Altbach and Kelly, 1978; Watson, 1982, 1984). These types of critiques were complemented and extended by Marxist theorists who explored the nature of education and class reproduction in developed countries. In the USA, for instance, Bowles and Gintis (1976) challenged the idea that schools functioned as mere producers of skilled workers, emphasising the transmission attributes of passivity and obedience and class inequalities. The dependency and Marxist authors provided strong critiques of the assumptions of modernisation and human capital theory and addressed the issues of imperialism, colonialism and class exploitation and reproduction that modernisation theory ignored.

Dependency theorists in turn were criticised for ignoring or paying insufficient attention to the internal obstacles to economic, social and political development, and for lacking in capacity and theoretical nuance to differentiate between different low-income countries development. They were also accused of providing a pessimistic view of the possibilities of national development and remaining at the level of theoretical abstraction that had little policy relevance. Educational critiques followed similar trajectories, suggesting that dependency theorists overemphasised the power of external actors in national education policy development and underplayed the positive role that international educational co-operation might play in national development (Noah and Eckstein, 1988).

**Neoliberal Political Economy of Development** emerged in the mid-1970s as a neoclassical critique of the role of the state in development. It challenged both modernisation and dependency theories, which differed on the obstacles to development (internal versus external factors) but were in some agreement about an active role for the state in national economic development. The neoliberal paradigm called for market-oriented reforms to provide the mechanism through which production, distribution and consumption within an international economy could be efficiently managed (Bhagwati, 1982; Little, 1982; Lal, 1983). In line with broader transhistorical neoclassical economic solutions, a neoliberal recipe - known as the Washington Consensus - was exported across the global south. Its spread was facilitated by the disciplinary mechanism of the debt crises in the early 1980s and the conditionality attached to International Monetary Fund and World Bank loans. The Washington Consensus included macroeconomic stabilisation mainly through fiscal discipline, structural reforms and trade liberalisation to 'open up' national economies to global competition and foreign direct investment.

The educational recipe that emerged from this was similarly prescriptive, and included: reduction in national education budgets (as a necessary part of fiscal austerity); cost-recovery for school fees; community financing; decentralisation of educational

governance; the promotion of the private sector in education; the prioritisation of basic education over higher education funding based on rates of return analysis rooted in human capital theory; and a range of other neoliberal-inspired reforms (Robertson et al., 2007).

Criticisms of the Washington Consensus are widespread, in terms of its narrow and economistic approach to national development, its lack of attention to non-market issues and systems, and particularly the way in which it reduces the role of economic and education policies to dealing with 'externalities', assuming that the externalities are the only obstacles to optimal outcomes. Similarly, it is critiqued for its failure to recognise unequal power relations, both north-south and class relations, as factors in understanding the prospects for economic and social development. In terms of policy outcomes, the Washington Consensus has been accused of worsening the economic and social development of broad swathes of the world's poor, reinforcing north-south inequality and dependency, and devastating health and education systems in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America during the 1980s and early 1990s (Amin, 1997, 2003; Chossudovsky 1997). In the educational domain it has been critiqued for its lack of attention to educational governance issues, the negative effects of its promotion of private education on social equity indicators, and its reliance on increasingly questionable rates of return analysis to justify education policies that have undermined funding for higher levels of education in low-income contexts (Robertson et al. 2007; Samoff, 1994; Klees, 2008).

The **Political Economy of Institutions** theory has demonstrated that, in the absence of appropriate institutions, market-oriented reforms may lead not only to frequent crises but also to new types of rent seeking and corruption activities - as was the case in reforming developing countries such as Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s and the transition countries of the ex-Soviet space. Hence a 'good governance' agenda emerged in the 1990s, emphasising the need for good institutions as a precondition for development. This agenda has often been termed the 'Post Washington Consensus', and rather than being seen as a break with neoliberal political economy, it is understood more as a mechanism to address some of its perceived weaknesses. In the education domain, this led to a much stronger interest in and emphasis on educational governance, policy implementation support and related governance reforms. It also led to recognition that education and health spending needed to be protected during periods of austerity, and that cost recovery in education (in terms of fees) should not include the basic levels, as the detrimental effects outweighed any positive incentives that cost recovery might induce. Finally, it also encouraged a more focused approach towards the issue of poverty in relation to economic growth, and strengthened calls for 'pro-poor' economic growth (Stiglitz, 1998). New institutional political economy has been critiqued for being too linked to neoliberal policy. Whilst addressing the institutional and therefore the political, it does so in such a narrow way that it fails to capture the complexities of the state/economy relationship. Similarly, it is critiqued for its over emphasis on internal factors in explaining national development. Criticisms from education are similar (see Bonal, 2002; Robertson et al., 2007; Klees, 2008; Tarabini, 2010; Verger et al., 2012).

The 1990s also witnessed the rise of a **Critical Political Economy** approach to development and education. The structuralist critique built on Marxist and Dependency Theory approaches and developed a critical assessment of globalisation, highlighting not only the unequal power relations but also the potential for transnational solidarity to challenge unequal power relations (Robinson, 1996; Amin, 1997; Cox and Sinclair, 1996; Duffield, 2001). On the other hand, the feminist political economy of development was inspired by broader research on patriarchy and the global gender divide, and advocated a gendered understanding of labour - including the unpaid labour of household work (Beneira, 1999; Luxton, 1997). Post-Development Theory and Post-Colonial Theory, emerging out of the cultural turn in social science and building on post-structural thinking, demonstrated the commonalities between the modernisation and dependency theories, particularly their commitment to industrialisation and urbanisation (modernity) as the

midwives of social and economic progress. Their research and thinking highlighted the negation of indigenous and traditional cultures and knowledge, the eurocentricity of mainstream and critical development thinking, and the on-going legacies of colonialism and imperialism in contemporary development practice. While this flourishing literature has had little direct impact on development policy - in stark contrast to the political economy theories above - it has had a strong impact on development thinking including in the field of education and development (Crossley and Tikly, 2004; Tikly, 2004).

The evolving field of critical political economy has also recently reflected a concern to integrate the 'cultural' into its analysis. This 'cultural political economy' orientation (Jessop, 2004, 2011; Jessop and Oosterlynck, 2008; Robertson, 2012) is underpinned in part by a recognition that 'orthodox political economy tends to offer impoverished accounts of how subjects and subjectivities are formed' (Jessop, 2004:3). Within such framings, the 'cultural' is associated with 'semiosis' or the 'intersubjective production of meaning'. The orientation to the 'cultural' is thus in part underpinned by a concern to enrich analysis of subjectivity or individual agency and social formation while retaining the concern of political economy with the constitutive role of the interconnected materialities of economics and politics (Jessop, 2004:1). Endorsing such a diversification of approaches within the political economy analysis of education, Robertson has recently called for a 'generous' understanding of the 'cultural' as a means to understand the 'business of making selves ... how worlds, meanings and consciousness are formed' (Robertson, 2012). Within this formulation, the 'cultural' is defined more expansively beyond the 'semiotic', to include issues of identity formation and mentalities which cultural political economy seeks to integrate into its analytical orbit.

### 2.3 The political economy of conflict and peacebuilding

The study of the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding focuses on the reasons why people go to war and debates strategies conducive to successful peacebuilding in the post-conflict period. While conflict studies is rooted in a long tradition of analysis of inter-state war, our focus here will be on the post-Cold War period and explanations for internal civil wars, which better reflect current debates on both conflict and peacebuilding. We draw on three broad bodies of literature, related to three major political economy approaches, but with a focus on conflict, peacebuilding and the role of education.

**Neoliberal Conflict Theory** (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000) draws on rational choice theories of human action. It suggests that wars are driven less by justified 'grievances' and far more by personal and collective 'greed'. Humans are viewed as engaged in conflict as 'economic agents' making cost-benefit calculations and trying to maximise returns on engagement in violent conflict. Therefore, the route to peace and security is not through addressing inequality and structural exclusion, nor by 'winning hearts and minds', but through increasing the cost of access to resources for violent actors. For Collier, rapid economic growth reduces the risk of conflict, because it raises the opportunity costs for joining a rebellion. Similarly, if a state has a high dependence on primary commodities, then the risk of conflict is greater, as these can become controlled by rebel groups.

Over the past decade, Collier's work has been influential on the US and World Bank approach to conflict and peacebuilding. It has also been influential in the political economy of peacebuilding literature, and reinforces the Liberal Peace Thesis (Helman and Ratner, 1993), that has accompanied, and justified, increased UN intervention in post-conflict environments. Three policy implications emerge from this work: (i) redistributive policies or attempts at addressing grievances are not likely to prevent conflict and not necessary for peacebuilding; (ii) peacebuilding should be based on market-oriented reforms, economic growth and democracy; and (iii) security is a necessary condition for development. Although it has become the standard approach to post-conflict intervention, the neoliberal conflict and peacebuilding theory is not without its critics (Paris, 2010).

Criticisms centre on the relationship between greed and grievance, and the way that Collier and others underplay the role of social, cultural and economic injustices in explaining wars.

In the neoliberal approach, education features as an issue because of its effects on conflict or peace – particularly its effects on potential recruits to armed conflicts. Essentially, it focuses on the role of education as a security resource, often linked to broader counterinsurgency strategies (Novelli, 2012). Central to this approach is the idea that youth need to be kept busy and offered alternative choices that can lead them to avoid engaging in war. Criticism revolves around the absence of a recognition that the struggle against injustice, including educational justice, might be a central explanation for engagement in armed conflict and that social and educational justice might be part of a broader solution (Novelli and Smith, 2011). In relation to the political economy of peacebuilding, there are also debates relating to the relationship between education and ‘Liberal Peacebuilding’ interventions. These include debates on the role of social service provision (McCandless, 2011), and also on the timing and sequencing of different peacebuilding components/interventions (see Novelli and Smith, 2011).

Another approach to conflict and peacebuilding is informed by recent contributions to **Neo-modernisation Conflict Theory**. Samuel Huntington (1993, 1996, 1997), a well-known modernisation theorist, has argued that while previous conflicts engaged ‘princes’, ‘nation states’ and then ‘ideologies’ (cold war), today’s conflicts are located around civilisations and culture, particularly between Islam and Christianity. While Huntington’s work has been widely criticised for being both provocative and essentialist (Said, 2001; Sen, 2006) it was influential in Washington policy circles, particularly under the George Bush administration, in justifying and explaining Western interventions post-9/11. It reproduces Western-centric claims on the superiority of Weberian state and liberal democracies, which are also present, in a more upbeat way, in the writings of Francis Fukuyama (1992) on failed states. Paris (2010) supports the core premises of the ‘liberal peace thesis’, but calls for attention to building institutions that would support the sustainability of liberal democracy in post-conflict environments. This work draws attention to the role of education systems in fostering negative attitudes towards the West – particularly through the effects of radical Islamic madrassas in Afghanistan and Pakistan and other Islamic regimes. Criticisms of these broad lines of neo-modernisation thinking reflect earlier critiques of modernisation thinking. They challenge the potentially ‘colonial’ and ‘imperial’ pretensions and underpinnings of peacebuilding operations (Chandler, 2002, 2004, 2005; Pugh, 2004).

The third approach to conflict and peacebuilding is related to **Critical Political Economy (CPE)**. One of the most prolific and influential contributors in this field is Mark Duffield. He argues (2001) that increased violence is a product of the highly exclusionary contemporary ‘informational economy’ and ‘polity’ where large geographic parts of the world are marginalised. He suggests that the neoliberal global economy and its related governance mechanisms lock many groups out of the benefits of ‘globalisation’ and increase the likelihood of entry into illicit activities, such as crime and violence. Drawing on this way of thinking, intervention should seek to address forms of ‘human insecurity’ that produce violence. Here, the traditional literature on development meets security studies, and the interventions seek to address issues of social exclusion, marginalisation and inequality. Duffield, in the broader tradition of critical political economy, is deeply sceptical of the role of the West in conflict-affected contexts, and emphasises colonial and imperial strategies and intents.

### 2.4 Towards a political economy analysis of education systems in conflict contexts

In the section above, what we have begun to unravel is a highly diverse set of literatures, focusing on different themes, drawing on distinct theoretical and ideological



underpinnings, and using conceptualisations of political economy ranging from a very narrow neoclassical approach that appears interested in political factors only in so much as they constitute ‘distortions’ or ‘externalities’ that inhibit market performance, to a very broad ‘cultural political economy’ which seeks to explore economic issues in relation to geography, gender, culture and politics (see Table 2.1).

Each approach has its strengths and challenges, and like a theatre light on a stage, illuminates certain aspects of social reality, whilst casting other parts into darkness. Cutting through the different areas of focus are also divisions between orthodox and critical political economy approaches, which have very different normative assumptions on social change, social justice and equity (see Table 2.2). In all approaches, there is an attempt to reduce the complexity of social reality, but the degree to which this is reduced is highly divergent. There is also a strong sense that while orthodox political economy is much better at providing simplified policy solutions - whether that be ‘the stages of development’ or the ‘Washington Consensus’, its recipes do not produce the intended outcomes. Conversely, critical political economy appears to be more effective at unpacking the tensions, contradictions and inequalities in everyday life and in education systems - analysing what policies work or not and for whom, but appears less useful in offering easy policy solutions.

**Table 2.1:** Contrasting orthodox and critical political economy approaches

Orthodox Political Economy and Development	Critical political economy
Neoclassical to neoliberal to neo-institutional (lineage with difference)	Marxism, Dependency Theory, World Systems Theory, Post-Colonialism, Feminist Theory, Critical Globalisation Theory, CPE
See West as ideal type	See North as the problem and ‘local/national’ as the solution
See education and development problems as endogenous	See education problems as exogenous
See donors/international community as neutral/helpers	See donors/international community as vested interests
Treat ‘local’ culture as something to fade away as modernisation occurs	Marxism is critiqued for lack of focus; other critical theory sees culture as central
See resistance to reform as deviance: teachers’ unions etc.	See resistance as legitimate in unequal system
Economic-centric with little focus on inequality/social justice	Central focus on inequality/ social exclusion/ social justice
Good at problem solving/policy solutions	Good at critique; often less able to offer policy solutions

The findings from the rigorous literature review presented in the following chapters of this report will be informed by both the political economy insights garnered from the above critique and earlier work on the limitations of research in the field of education and conflict (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, 2008).

A summary of these insights is presented below:

1. Political economy (PE) is an array of approaches, from a very narrow neoclassical/new institutionalism (Grindle, 2004) to a broad cultural political

economy of education (CCPEE) (Robertson and Dale, 2013) and spans a range of disciplines.

2. Research in the field of education and conflict has historical roots linked to these foundational ideas in political economy, development theory, conflict theories and educational research - explicitly and implicitly.
3. Educational policies and interventions are underpinned by political and economic interests and preferences that political economy analysis can unpack.
4. Education does not exist in isolation from broader social issues and processes which affect policy interventions and shape content and outcomes in conflict-affected contexts.
5. Policy environments are dynamic, with structures, agents and institutions in various degrees of flux, and policies are both affected by and effect the relationships between these different structures, institutions and agents; context is therefore a crucial factor in political economy analysis.
6. Political economy analysis can explore all moments of the policy cycle - not just 'obstacles to policy implementation' - who decides on policy, what are the likely distributional effects of policy and for whom (winners and losers)?
7. Research needs to go beyond 'methodological nationalism' (that problems begin and end in the nation state), but equally avoid 'methodological globalism' (that over-privileges global actors and factors).
8. We need to take culture seriously, moving beyond ethnocentrism and economism and explore issues of religion, nationalism, identities, knowledge and values.

## The political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts

**Table 2.2:** Political economy of development, conflict and education: theoretical approaches, assumptions and main authors

Debates	Approaches	Core assumptions and focus	Main authors
Political Economy Analysis	Classical Political Economy	Interplay between economic and political factors; distribution of wealth determined by power asymmetries.	Adam Smith, David Hume, Francois Quesnay, David Ricardo, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill
	Neoclassical Reaction to Political Economy	Market versus State; market as best determiner of supply and demand.	William Stanley Jevon, Carl Menger, Leon Walras, Alfred Marshall
	Institutional Political Economy	Institutional quality influences economic outcomes; attention to power and distributional asymmetries; role of regulatory and conflict-resolution institutions in avoiding adverse consequences.	James Madison, John Locke, Barrington Moore, Theda Skopkol, Douglas North
	Marxist and Critical Political Economy	Critique of capitalism; focus on exploitation and inequality between social classes.	Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Karl Polanyi
Education and Development	Modernisation Theory	Capitalist development. 'Becoming Modern' and transforming 'archaic' traditions	WW Rostow, Theodore Shultz, Gary Becker
	Dependency Theory	Focus on North-South inequalities; dependency as the reason for underdevelopment.	Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein, Theotonio Dos Santos, Samir Amin
	Neoliberal Political Economy of Development	Market-oriented reforms; macroeconomic stabilisation and trade liberalisation.	Jagdish Bhagwati, John Williamson, Anne Krueger
	The Political Economy of Institutions	Limitations of the 'getting markets right' approach. Need for 'good governance' and attacking poverty.	Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, Dani Rodrik

Debates	Approaches	Core assumptions and focus	Main authors
	Critical Political Economy	Critique of globalisation; eurocentricity, patriarchy and modernisation as the problems.	Buenaventura Dos Santos, Edward Said, Bob Jessop, Roger Dale, Susan Robertson
Conflict and Peacebuilding	Neoliberal Theories of Conflict and Peacebuilding	Rational choice theory - economic greed; economic growth as the solution.	Paul Collier
	Neo-Modernisation Conflict and Peacebuilding	'Clash of civilisations'	Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama
	Critical Political Economy of Conflicts and Peacebuilding	Critique of securitisation and neo-imperialism; inequality and exclusion as the roots of conflict.	Mark Duffield, David Chandler, Michael Pugh

### 3. Review methodology

The aim of this rigorous literature review is to provide theoretically informed and policy-relevant insights into the factors that bear upon education policy in conflict-affected contexts. It is based on an emerging literature on the political economy of education in conflict-affected contexts. Although this literature is fragmented and based mainly on qualitative evidence, it does provide a rich set of insights into the challenges of improving education systems in conflict-affected contexts, and the embedded nature of the education systems and actors within local, national and global economic, political, institutional and cultural contexts. This chapter outlines the methodology of the review process and the criteria used to assess the quality of these studies.

Our review methodology combined purposive sampling with systematic review methods, with a view to developing a narrative synthesis of the qualitative evidence from a body of literature that is heterogeneous in terms of methods used and issues addressed. We used the purposive sampling methodology to identify the intellectual roots of the political economy literature on development and education in conflict-affected contexts. We used the systematic review methodology to search, select and synthesise the relevant literature. The combination of the two enabled us to provide: (i) a tractable account of the strengths and blind spots of the political economy approaches that inform the theoretical/conceptual and empirical literature on education in conflict-affected contexts; and (ii) a verifiable synthesis of the evidence from the latter on three stages of the policy cycle - namely, agenda setting, policy formulation and implementation. A brief summary of each method is provided below.

There are three broad categories of purposive sampling techniques: (i) sampling to achieve representativeness or comparability; (ii) sampling of special or unique cases when a specific group of cases is the focus of the investigation; and (iii) sequential sampling, used when the goal of the research is the generation of broadly defined themes (Patton, 2002; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Teddlie and Yu, 2007). In this review, we combined the special-case and sequential sampling methods [methods (ii) and (iii)] to ensure that the political economy work we have selected is representative of the political economy traditions and that it underpins the research effort on the political economy of education in conflict-affected contexts. Our selection of the political economy canons is compatible with an inclusive definition of political economy, which can be stated as the study of how the relationships between individuals and society and between markets and the state affect the production, distribution and consumption of resources, paying attention to power, information and incentive asymmetries (Laffont, 2011). The work we selected enabled us to provide a brief summary of the major schools of thought on: (i) the political economy of development; (ii) the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding; and (iii) the role of education in development and peacebuilding.

For the rigorous review, we followed a systematic review methodology guided by best-practice recommendations in the relevant literature (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006; Gough et al., 2012). The methodology governs four stages of the review: (i) literature search; (ii) study selection; (iii) critical evaluation; and (iv) evidence synthesis.

In **stage 1**, we followed an inclusive search strategy to ensure inclusiveness. We used a wide range of search terms aimed at capturing the four dimensions of the research field: (i) the political economy dimension (32 search terms); (ii) the global context of education policy (24 search terms); (iii) the education system dimension, including governance, access, quality and outcomes (16 search terms); and (iv) the conflict dimension (13 search terms, see Appendix 1). We conducted electronic searches in a large number of databases, beginning with SCOPUS, ERIC, Web of Knowledge, British Education Index and Australian

Education Index. This yielded 173 studies, of which 43 were subsequently selected for in-depth review in stage 2 (see Appendix 2). Then we searched the databases of key development agencies to capture relevant agency-commissioned publications, including: The World Bank; UNESCO; the International Rescue Committee (IRC); Save the Children; USAID; DFID; The Global Coalition for the Protection of Education from Attack (GCPEA); the INEE Working Group on Conflict and Fragility; UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO:IIEP); the International Consultative Forum on Education for All; and the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT). This yielded 103 references, of which 21 were selected for in-depth review in stage 2.

We also conducted hand searches, using two widely recognised methods: going through the contents of major academic journals and using citation information. The key journals were *International Journal of Educational Development*; *Comparative Education Review*; *Comparative Education*; and *Prospects*. We conducted the journal search right after the electronic searches. The hand search based on citations was conducted after the first round of selecting the studies from electronic searches on the basis of title and abstract information. This yielded five additional references.

Beyond the search in electronic databases and the hand searches, we also contacted a number of agencies actively involved in education in conflict-affected contexts, including UNICEF, Save the Children, DFID and USAID. Our communications indicated that some potentially relevant material was not in the public domain because of the political sensitivity of its content and therefore could not be included at any stage of the review process. Therefore, we do not claim that our search has captured all relevant studies. Particularly, we may have missed some studies or reports produced by local researchers or experts in conflict-affected countries - to the extent that such studies are not placed on the web. However, we are confident that our inclusive approach to the literature search has minimised publication selection bias as a result of: (i) using a comprehensive list of search terms that we have developed by repeated iterations, with active participation of an information specialist (Joanna Ball, Research Support Manager of the University of Sussex Library); (ii) conducting a systematic hand search of citations and related journal archives; and (iii) contacting relevant agencies as well as experts in the field.

In **stage 2**, we conducted study selection by interrogating the title and abstract information for each study with the following questions:

1. Does the study analyse the drivers for and obstacles to education policy reform in conflict-affected contexts?
2. Does the study address financing, access, governance, quality or outcomes of the education system in conflict-affected contexts?

We included the study for critical evaluation if the title and abstract information was conducive to a 'yes' answer to either of the questions above. Selection decisions were made by two independent reviewers and any differences between the decisions were resolved by consensus based on assessment of the title/abstract information in the light of the selection questions. The full text of all studies that went through the first round of the selection process was uploaded on to EPPI-Reviewer.

In **stage 3**, we conducted a critical evaluation of the studies on the basis of full-text information, using validity, reliability and applicability (VRA) criteria. Validity refers to theoretical rigour that minimises the risk of bias; reliability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study are reproducible; and applicability refers to the extent to which the findings are related to conflict-affected contexts.

We considered a study as satisfying the **validity** criterion if: (i) its analytical framework was stated clearly and related to existing literature; (ii) it examined at least one

dimension of the education system (i.e., financing, governance, access, quality or outcomes); and (iii) it draws on original evidence, in addition to any evidence cited from other studies. Criterion (iii) implies that studies that provide literature reviews only are used in the discussion of the research and practice background to the issue at hand rather than in the synthesis of the evidence on that issue. However, studies that draw upon official statistics, government reports or reports commissioned by international agencies are used in the evidence synthesis section. These studies are described as ‘synthesis reports’ in the literature mapping.

A study was considered to have satisfied the **reliability** criterion if the evidence used in the study was collected and analysed with a clearly stated and relevant methodology. In applying the reliability criterion, we differentiated between mainly theoretical/conceptual and empirical studies. For the theoretical/conceptual studies, the reliability criterion requires that the theoretical/conceptual claims are supported not only with references to existing literature but also with documented secondary data from published studies or reports. For empirical studies, the reliability requirement implies a clearly stated and justified method of data collection and analysis.

Finally, we considered a study to satisfy the **applicability** criterion if the findings of the study were based on documented evidence from a conflict-affected state or region.

We included a study for the rigorous review if it satisfied all VRA criteria. We considered a study to score high (H) or medium (M) with respect to each of the VRA criteria; and provided an overall rank based on the aggregate score. The overall VRA rank is high (H) if the study scores high for each VRA criterion. The rank is below high (H-) if the study scores medium (M) in one individual VRA criterion. The rank is above medium (M+) if the study scores 2 medium and 1 high scores on individual VRA criteria. Finally, the rank is medium (M) if the study has three medium scores from the three VRA criteria. The critical evaluation and scoring work was conducted by three independent reviewers, and any difference between reviewer decisions was resolved by consensus. The VRA scores and the overall VTA ranks are coded on EPPI-Reviewer (See Appendix 3).

To ensure the consistency of the VRA ranks, three members of the review team (Sean Higgins, Mehmet Ugur and Oscar Valiente) discussed the critical evaluation methodology before assigning VRA scores to included studies. Following this discussion, the critical evaluation was conducted independently. Then the review team (including the principal investigator Mario Novelli) held a half-day meeting to present and discuss the VRA scores. There was convergence between individual scores for 70 percent of the studies. Disagreements between the scores for the remaining 30 percent were resolved by consensus, following discussions within the team. The objectivity of the VRA scores was ensured through two mechanisms: (i) the triple-blind scoring exercise; and (ii) the resolution of disagreements through discussion, with the participation of the principal investigator, who was not involved in the scoring exercise.

In **stage 4**, we extracted and synthesised the evidence, drawing on the narrative synthesis methodology that Popay et al. (2006) recommend for synthesis of qualitative evidence. Narrative synthesis is a method of synthesising and classifying qualitative evidence from multiple studies that are dissimilar in terms of methods used and/or questions asked. It provides flexibility for addressing review questions that require the use of qualitative findings and enables reviewers to: (i) develop a theoretical account of how change or persistence occurs, why and for whom; (ii) develop a method of organising and synthesising the evidence that is context- or issue-specific; and (iii) identify the extent to which synthesised findings are conditional on some mediating factors that reflect the context of the education policy and the dimensions of the research field.

The narrative synthesis requires thematic and content identifiers under which the qualitative evidence from the diverse literature can be pooled and synthesised. For this



purpose, we have used thematic identifiers that correspond to three stages of the policy cycle, namely, the agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation stages. The content identifiers, on the other hand, correspond to the dimensions of the education system (which include financing, governance, access, quality and outcomes) and the drivers of and obstacles to change in these dimensions due to local, national and global factors. Given this methodology, we first present partial narrative synthesis results in three thematic sections that reflect the stages of the policy cycle. Then we provide an overall synthesis that pools the thematic findings.

## 4. Characteristics and quality of the literature

The studies selected for the in-depth review process have been classified by the following descriptive criteria: publication type, nature of the study, research design and geographic focus. In order to evaluate the relevance of the literature, the studies have also been classified by three quality criteria: validity, reliability and applicability (see Chapter 3). Together, they enable some conclusions to be drawn about the nature of the current evidence base in relation to knowledge of the political economy of education in conflict-affected states.

### 4.1 Description of the literature

Of the 69 selected studies, the majority came from recent publications in academic journals (42), reflecting the burgeoning interest in this field over the past five years within academic institutions (see Table 4.1). It is also significant that our data comes not only from education and education and development journals (e.g. the *International Journal of Educational Development*) but also from a range of titles reflecting different specialisms, including anthropology (*Anthropology Education Quarterly*), comparative education (*Compare, Comparative Education, Prospects*), the politics and international relations of sub-Saharan Africa (*African Affairs*), and the broader field of international development (*Development in Practice, Development Policy Review*). Indeed, the diversity of journals that have furnished relevant studies underpins what has emerged as a key finding from this study, that the political economy of education in conflict-affected contexts draws from a diverse disciplinary base (see Table 4.6). The data also include reports from a range of actors and aid organisations working in conflict contexts, including UNESCO, Save the Children, UNICEF, the World Bank, the International Consultative Forum on Education for All and the INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility, as well as independent, non-profit policy research organisations such as the Afghanistan Analysts Network. The literature therefore constitutes a pooling of insights drawn from different networks within the field - practitioners, policy makers, academic researchers and aid organisations. Direct communication with international agencies made clear that not all of the relevant material is currently in the public domain for strategic and operational reasons linked to its potentially sensitive nature.

**Table 4.1:** Selected studies for in-depth review by publication type

Publication type	Number of studies
Book Chapter	2
Book	4
Journal Article	42
Report	21

While the studies draw on research from conflict-affected regions around the world (see Table 4.2), the majority come from sub-Saharan Africa (16) and South Asia (15). Fewer selected studies had their geographical focus on East Asia and Pacific (7), Latin America (5), Europe and Central Asia (2), or Middle East and North Africa (1). A very substantial number of studies provided or reviewed evidence from more than one region of the world (23).

#### 4. Characteristics and quality of the literature

**Table 4.2:** Selected studies for in-depth review by geographic focus

Geographic focus	Number of studies
East Asia and Pacific	7
Latin America	5
South Asia	15
Europe and Central Asia	2
Middle East and North Africa	1
Sub-Saharan Africa	16
Multi-region	23

The majority of studies are empirical (42), country-specific studies of educational interventions and syntheses of multi-country studies, with a small number focusing on more conceptual issues (6) including theoretical models and assumptions underpinning research (see Table 4.3).

While country-specific in their focus, many studies focus on the role of global as well as national actors as shown in Table 4.5. This attention to the intersection of education with political economy factors at multi-scalar levels suggests a commitment to a mode of analysis which avoids methodological nationalism, which is one of the hallmarks of critical political economy approaches as discussed earlier. That the majority of studies combine a focus on global as well as national actors also indicates their attention to exploring all moments of the policy cycle.

In terms of research design, the majority of studies can be classified as observational (68) and only one could be classified as a study with a semi-experimental research design (see Table 4.4). In general, research into political economy of education issues seems to rely on qualitative approaches and to be essentially country-specific.

**Table 4.3:** Selected studies for in-depth review by type of study

Type of study	Number of studies
Literature Review	3
Theoretical/conceptual	6
Empirical	42
Synthesis Report	18

**Table 4.4:** Selected studies for in-depth review by research design

Research design	Number of studies
Observational	68
Experimental	1

The diversity and eclecticism of the selected studies is particularly striking. This literature offers a range of political economy lenses on to education systems in post-conflict settings, drawing on a variety of research methodologies. Some studies offer insights into the mentalities, values, identity, motivations, and agency of stakeholders and communities (e.g. Breidlid, 2013; Karangwa et al, 2010; Giustozzi and Franco, 2011), while others unravel the micro-political dynamics and political cultures operating to condition educational and other service provision (de Herdt et al., 2012). Some focus on the history and politics of educational change (Little, 2010), while others offer micro-analysis of the personal dynamics and politics of single educational institutions (Brannelly et al., 2009). Some focus on the cultural attitudes and practices shaping educational policies and interventions (Tan, 2008; Bano, 2009).

Maclure and Denov, 2009; Trani et al., 2011, 2012). Some studies base their conclusions on qualitative interviews with educational and other stakeholders (e.g. Giustozzi and Franco, 2011; Poppema, 2009; Pherali and Garratt, 2014) while others draw upon critical analysis of policy and strategy documents, and political and legal frameworks (Takala, 1998; Shields and Rappleye, 2008; Shah, 2012), anthropological and ethnographic research methods (Sørensen, 2008; Shah, 2012) and institutional analysis (Berry, 2010). Some individual studies belong to larger groups focusing on the drivers of conflict and peacebuilding within post-conflict countries (Novelli and Smith, 2011) or offer country-specific political economy analysis (CfBT Education Trust, 2011; Pherali et al., 2011; Williams, 2012). The research approaches adopted in the studies thus privilege different strands within the array of political economy approaches outlined in the previous section, collectively reflecting a diverse and evolving sub-field of knowledge production. While drawing attention to the somewhat fragmented and unsystematic state of political economy analysis, the literature selected also reveals a healthy intellectual variety of perspectives, which when synthesised begins to reveal multiple avenues for further critical reflection and research.

**Table 4.5:** Focus of country studies selected for in-depth review (on global, national or local actors or on the interactions between them). The chart includes empirical studies which focused on one or a group of countries and does not include studies whose main purpose was to offer a literature review, synthesis report or which addressed conceptual issues only.

Studies	Country focus	Actors
Giustozzi and Franco, 2011	Afghanistan	National
Sigsgaard, 2009, 2011		Global-national
Trani et al, 2012		Global-national
Komatsu, 2012	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Global-national
Magill, 2010		Global-national

#### 4. Characteristics and quality of the literature

Studies	Country focus	Actors
Toomer et al, 2011 Kalyanpur, 2011 Tan, 2008	Cambodia	Global-national Global-national Global-national
De Herdt et al., 2012 Williams, 2012 Titeca and de Herdt, 2011	Democratic Republic of the Congo	National-local National-local National-local
Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003 Jimenez and Sawada, 1999	El Salvador	Global-national Global-national
World Bank, 2005	Ethiopia	National
Gershberg et al., 2009 Poppema, 2009	Guatemala	Global-national-local Global-national-local
Vongalis-Macrow, 2005	Iraq	Global-national
Zakhariah, 2011	Lebanon	Global-national
Williams, 2011	Liberia	Global-national
Davies, 2012	Multi-country study: Afghanistan Angola, Nepal, South Sudan	Global-national
Takala, 1998	Multi-country study: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia	Global-national-local
Trani et al, 2011	Multi-country study: Sierra Leone, Sudan	Global-national-local
Berry, 2010	Multi-country study: Nepal, Afghanistan, Yemen	Global-national-local (non-state actors)
Pherali, 2013; Shields and Rappleye, 2008; Pherali et al., 2011; Pherali and Garratt, 2014; Vaux, 2011; Van Wessel and Van Hirtum, 2013	Nepal	Global-national
Gershberg and Meade, 2005	Nicaragua	Global-national-local
Bano, 2009, 2011 Winthrop and Graff, 2010	Pakistan	Global-national National
Baum, 2012	Philippines	Global-national

Studies	Country focus	Actors
World Bank, 2004 Karangwa et al, 2010	Rwanda	National Global-national
Esser, 2012 Novelli and Smith, 2011 Maclure and Denov, 2009	Sierra Leone	Global-national-local Global-national Global-national
Bennaars et al., 1996	Somalia	Global-national
Maodzwa-Taruvunga and Cross, 2012	South Africa	Global-national
Little, 2010 Sørensen, 2008	Sri Lanka	National-local Global-national-local
Breidlid, 2010	Sudan	National
Macpherson, 2011 Millo and Barnett, 2004 Shah, 2012	Timor-Leste	National Global-national Global-national-local
CfBT Education Trust, 2011	Zimbabwe	National

**Table 4.6:** The chart below contains a sample of studies to indicate the range of disciplinary approaches adopted within the material selected for in-depth review

Disciplinary approaches within studies	Studies
Politics of education	Sri Lanka (Little, 2010)
Globalisation and education	Multi-country review (Ayyar, 1996)
Discourse analysis	Sudan (Breidlid, 2010)
Political economy of education - country studies	Zimbabwe (CfBT Trust, 2011)  Guatemala (Poppema, 2009) Timor-Leste (Shah, 2012) El Salvador (Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003) Democratic Republic of the Congo (De Herdt et al., 2012; Williams, 2012; Titeca and De Herdt, 2011)  Sierra Leone (Novelli, 2011)  Nepal (Shields and Rappleye, 2008; Pherali et al., 2011; Pherali and Garrett,

#### 4. Characteristics and quality of the literature

Disciplinary approaches within studies	Studies
	2014)
Cultural political economy	Cambodia (Toomer et al., 2011; Tan, 2008)
Gender/religion/disabilities/mentality of key actors/curriculum reform/teacher agency	Sierra Leone (Maclure and Denov, 2009)
	Afghanistan (Giustozzi and Franco, 2011)
	Pakistan (Winthrop and Graff, 2010)
	Cambodia (Kalyanpur, 2011)
	Rwanda (Karangwa et al., 2010)
	Bosnia-Herzegovina (Komatsu, 2012)
	Pakistan (Bano, 2009, 2011)
	Nepal (Pherali, 2013)
	Timor-Leste (Shah, 2012)
	Iraq (Vongalis-Macrow, 2005)
Anthropology	Sri Lanka (Sørensen, 2012)

#### 4.2 Assessment of the quality of the literature

In evaluating the quality of the data selected for in-depth review, we thought it unfair to rate studies against criteria related to political economy issues or models of analysis which were not the primary concern of the research aims or methodology of the selected studies. All the studies selected provide insights which contribute to the aims of reviewing what current literature tells us about the political economy of education in post-conflict settings. As such they are all of a high level of fitness for purpose. Their attention to different strands within political economy analysis and their deployment of different research methods renders the imposition of a ranking hierarchy deeply problematic and inappropriate.

However, it was important for us to establish that the conclusions reached in individual studies - which provide the core data for reviewing what we know within an emerging and evolving field of study - were underpinned by rigorous and high-quality research, based on sound methodological and theoretical premises. Each study was rated for its validity, reliability and applicability (VAR). As explained in more detail in Chapter 3, *validity* refers to theoretical rigour that minimises the risk of bias; *reliability* refers to the extent to which the findings of the study are reproducible; and *applicability* refers to the extent to which the findings are related to conflict-affected contexts. The tables below summarise the findings for individual studies, which were given an aggregate rating (composite VAR score). The results indicate that the majority of studies selected for review were of a high quality, demonstrating adherence to high standards of validity, reliability and



applicability. As a body of evidence, the literature is evaluated as being of a high quality whose diverse claims are, for the most part, grounded in rigorous and robust research.

**Table 4.7:** Selected studies for in-depth review by validity rating

Validity	Number of studies
High	53
Medium	16

**Table 4.8:** Selected studies for in-depth review by reliability rating

Reliability	Number of studies
High	56
Medium	13

**Table 4.9:** Selected studies for in-depth review by applicability rating

Applicability	Number of studies
High	55
Medium	14

**Table 4.10:** Selected studies for in-depth review by composite VAR score

VAR score	Number of studies
High	46
High –	8
Medium +	6
Medium	9

## 5. Review of the political economy of education literature in conflict-affected states since 1990

Mindful of the goal of this review to be critically informed and policy aware, the authors decided to frame the discussion of the findings around the three stages of the policy cycle process which have been identified in policy analysis (Thomas and Grindle, 1990). Thus the material will be discussed in relation to what it tells us about the political economy factors impinging on agenda setting at the global level (Section 5.1), as well as policy formulation (Section 5.2) and implementation (Section 5.3) at national levels. It is hoped that this analytical framework will enable the review to do justice to the diverse body of insights to be gleaned from the data, while also highlighting their pragmatic implications at moments recognisable to the diverse array of practitioners operating in the field. While separating these moments for analytical purposes, we are of course aware of their interconnectedness within the continuum of the policy cycle. In elucidating some of the political economy factors operating at each stage, the review also highlights insights that cut across the stages. Processing and evaluating the data in this way hopefully wrests analytical clarity and practical resonance from an unsystematic, if richly informative body of insights.

### 5.1 The political economy of agenda setting

In the first part of this section we explore the political economy actors and factors that education policy makers working in conflict-affected contexts might reflect upon and engage with in order to both better understand policy options and reflect on the possibilities to strategically engage in agenda-setting processes. In this phase of the policy cycle, the political economy literature can provide us with a sense of macro-level issues, such as global funding priorities, broader humanitarian, peacebuilding and security agendas, key global actors and issues that shape and frame the education-in-conflict context debate; it can also condition priorities and provide a sense of the limits of the possible. Whilst agenda setting is not synonymous with 'global actors', it is at this phase of the policy cycle that international actors and factors appear most influential (Ayyar, 1996).

#### 5.1.1 Aid flows to education in conflict-affected contexts

ODA [overseas development assistance] to fragile states represents USD 50 billion, or 38 percent of total ODA, in 2010. However, half of all ODA to fragile states goes to only seven 'donor darlings'. Concentration is also an issue at the country level. Countries such as the Republic of Congo and Iraq depend on one donor for over half their aid - a level of concentration that is considered excessive. At the other extreme, places such as the West Bank and Gaza and Afghanistan suffer from an overabundance of small donors, making co-ordination difficult. Aid also remains very volatile: each of the fragile states has had at least one aid shock in the past 10 years. (OECD, 2012:43)

The above quote gives a sense of the high volume of resources flowing to conflict-affected contexts and the uneven, volatile, highly politicised and challenging nature of aid flows to conflict-affected contexts that conditions education sector support and reform (see also Davies, 2012). Between 2000 and 2010, average per capita ODA to CAFS grew by half in constant terms, but its distribution was highly skewed towards a few select countries. In 2006, Iraq and Afghanistan accounted for over 60 percent of all aid to conflict-affected countries (Reality of Aid, 2008:217 cited in Novelli, 2010:454); while this was an extreme year, subsequent patterns continue to reinforce this core finding: in 2008, six conflict-affected states received 51 percent of ODA funding while the other 37 countries shared the rest. In 2009, 50 percent of ODA to CAFS went to only eight countries, and this

concentration of aid is predicted to continue in the coming decade (OECD, 2012). Aid to conflict-affected states is also highly volatile, with rapid shifts of flows to different countries over short periods of time (OECD, 2012:62)

Within conflict-affected contexts, education sector funding as a percentage of overall funding is significantly less than in low-income contexts in general. Dolan and Perry (2007) noted that between 2006 and 2008 only 4 percent of total ODA was directed to education in conflict-affected contexts versus 13 percent in non-conflict low-income contexts. This meant that aid for education in conflict-affected contexts was just 25 percent of overall ODA education commitments. Furthermore, large amounts of aid for education were directed to a very small number of countries. While Afghanistan and Nigeria received \$247 million and \$219 million respectively, others like Eritrea and Zimbabwe received just \$3 million and \$5.5 million. As Turrent and Oketch note (2009:357) ‘Given the challenges of scarce domestic resources for education, overwhelming out of school numbers, and low retention rates - it is clear that “need” is not a central tenet of external education financing’. This education-funding gap extends across both humanitarian and development funding. A recent Global Monitoring Report Update on education funding to conflict-affected contexts noted that despite calls for 4 percent of all humanitarian aid to be allocated to education, the amount declined between 2009 and 2012 from 2.2 percent to 1.4 percent (UNESCO, 2013).

### *5.1.2 Why are donors reluctant to give CAFSS a fair share of aid to education?*

Emerging from this data are two core questions that drive some of the key political economy issues at the agenda-setting level for education actors in conflict-affected contexts. Firstly, why is education not receiving a fair share of international development and humanitarian assistance? Secondly, what are the drivers of aid allocation that condition not only its volume, but also its content?

Dolan and Perry (2007) note a range of evidence and reasons why donors appear to be insufficiently committed to funding education in conflict-affected states and indicate that donors have been reluctant to provide funding particularly due to concerns over the governance and administration of resources in contexts where capacity is weak, which is often the norm in conflict-affected contexts, which facilitates corruption, politicisation, and wastage of funds. Turrent and Oketch (2009:357) support this finding, concluding that despite international commitment to UPE, ‘the prevailing attitude of selectively allocating aid to “good performers” has led education in fragile states to being sidelined by the development community’. The challenges and problems of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI)<sup>3</sup> is further evidence of this, and for the need to develop more flexible modes of managing funds in education. The literature notes a range of difficulties in transferring and approving funds in conflict-affected contexts and charts a series of attempts to address this (see UNESCO, 2011:233-238 for a summary) and FTI offers a range of options tailored to conflict-affected contexts, including: the use of multi-donor trust funds and pooled funding mechanisms; general or sector budget support; and the use of social funds that transfer resources directly to communities in need, often via NGOs. Schmidt and Taylor (2010) provide a convincing account of the success of the Liberia Pooled Fund, jointly set up by the Soros Foundation, UNICEF and the Liberian government, which allowed for both quick disbursement of funds and oversight and management by the key donors.

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<sup>3</sup> Following the recommendations of the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG 2), the Education For All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) was launched in 2002 as the first-ever global compact on education with the aim of helping low-income countries accelerate progress towards universal primary education. In September 2011, the EFA-FTI changed its name to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

### 5.1.3 *The politics of aid giving in conflict-affected contexts*

While there are clearly good reasons (cited above) in relation to donor concern with value for money and efficiency issues, these cannot explain either the highly unequal nature of aid to conflict-affected contexts, nor the volatility, and for that reason, this paints a far too technical picture of the obstacles to a more efficient and effective aid regime for conflict-affected contexts. It is important to note that institutional obstacles linked to concerns with good governance have not prevented vast sums of money being transferred to Afghanistan and Iraq since 9/11 in education and beyond. What can perhaps better answer this are deeper explanations on the political ties of donors with particular countries, both historically and due to contemporary economic needs and dependencies.

The politicisation of aid is not a new phenomenon. During the period after World War II, aid appears to have been allotted largely on the basis of where a country stood in the Cold War confrontation (Lundborg, 1998; Wang, 1999; Christian Aid, 2004 cited in Novelli & Lopes-Cardozo, 2008). Crucially, the geography of aid was based less on perceived humanitarian or development need and much more on political alliances. In the post-Cold War period, this politicisation of aid and the negative effects was dissected by several scholars, and there were hopes that the new era would allow for a much more focused, transparent and regulated aid architecture that would allow a concentration of resources on those in most need (Novelli, 2010).

However, the post-Cold War aspirations of peaceful co-existence and peace dividends were short-lived with the outbreak of a wide range of conflicts in the 1990s, which led to increased international intervention in conflict-affected contexts. While driven by strong humanitarian impulses, Western intervention was also unevenly focused on some particular conflicts rather than others, leading to accusations of double standards. Aid was also highly unpredictable, with donor darlings (e.g. Iraq) becoming donor orphans as attention moved towards the next global crises (OECD, 2012; Novelli and Smith, 2011; Novelli, 2010). After the events of 9/11 and the subsequent military interventions in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the global politics of the war on terror placed further pressure on the geography, volume, content and sectoral prioritisation of aid.

### 5.1.4 *Diplomacy, development and defence: the rise of the 3D strategy*

Since the mid-2000s, many of the major international development agencies, such as DFID, USAID, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian International Development Agency and AusAID, have adopted a new policy related to international development assistance known as the '3D' approach (Diplomacy, Defence and Development), which seeks to integrate and embed development assistance within national diplomatic and security priorities. This '3D' approach appears to be institutionalising the previously ad hoc process of the merging of security and development within Western governments' aid policy (Keenan, 2008 cited in Novelli, 2010).

While the '3D' approach is presented as being a logical development to ensure policy coherence, and also as a means of vindicating the importance of international development assistance, concerns have been raised about the relative power of the different dimensions of foreign policy making. Critics have voiced concerns that by merging development, diplomacy and defence, the much more powerful defence and diplomacy wings may undermine and distort the focus of international development assistance (Patrick and Brown, 2007:3 cited in Novelli, 2010).

As a result, there is increasing concern that international development's humanitarian prerogatives are in danger of being subordinated to short-term political and military objectives; this threatens to both undermine and discredit the reputation of international development assistance as a mechanism to promote sustainable development and

wellbeing in low-income countries (ibid). Similar comparisons and continuities could be made in many of the other countries following the 3D approach, which suggests that this is much more of a structural shift in the way international development is conceived by the major bilateral donors and therefore continues to merit further inquiry and research (ibid).

### *5.1.5 The security-first approach to post-conflict reconstruction*

Contemporary international interventions in post-conflict environments are informed by what Paris (2004) and others call the ‘liberal peace thesis’ (cited in Novelli, 2011). This prioritises the introduction of liberal democracy and market forces as key drivers of stability once security has been achieved. According to Castañeda (2009, cited in Novelli, 2011), this can be conceptualised as a ‘trickle-down peace’ approach, whereby you first aim to obtain a ‘negative peace’ (cessation of violence) then democracy, and these two factors will then encourage foreign direct investment, which will subsequently lead to economic growth. The model has been strongly criticised, for just as trickle-down economics failed to reach many of the most vulnerable sections of populations in the 1980s during International Monetary Fund/World Bank-promoted structural adjustment policies and acted as a catalyst to many conflicts, so many express doubts that ‘trickle-down peace’ will be a sufficiently robust development model to address the marginalised majority, and may itself ‘contain the seeds of continuing insecurity’ (Duffield, 1998: 10 cited in Novelli, 2011).

The minimalist security agenda, followed by the liberal peace thesis, frames much of the international discourse on peacebuilding and can help us to explain why investment in social services - health, education and welfare - in UN peacebuilding programmes lags behind investment in security and democracy promotion. Importantly, the small amounts spent on social services (including education) in the UN Peace Building Fund reflect the institutionalisation of the ‘security first’ focus (Smith, 2005; Novelli and Smith, 2011; Pherali et al., 2011; Zakharia, 2011).

While the emphasis on security does not necessarily preclude a focus on redressing geographical, social and ethnic inequalities, poverty reduction and improving social services, it does emphasise the chronological order of the importance of security versus social reforms: moving from conflict to security to development. Security, then, is perceived as the foundation upon which development can occur. This ‘security first’ approach then envisages a second phase, where security leads to broader development goals. Several commentators suggest that while security in post-conflict situations is clearly important, it is not a sufficient condition to build a sustainable peace that can address the underlying drivers that led to conflict in the first place (Denney, 2011: 279 cited in Novelli, 2011).

### *5.1.6 The competing dynamics of different sectors*

As we have seen from the above discussion, the literature highlights the different political and sectoral dynamics which set the ‘rules of the game’ or the limits within which education policy in conflict contexts becomes framed. Some commentators have tried to unpack these dynamics by exploring the logics of intervention of different sectors - humanitarian, development, security - that are operating in conflict contexts, and how education is perceived (Shields and Rappleye, 2008; Berry, 2010; Novelli, 2012; Winthrop and Matsui, 2013).

#### International development sector

The international development sector focuses primarily on the factors and processes that can lead to sustainable development. Central to their concerns are issues relating to poverty reduction, gender equity and economic development. Education is seen as a central component of international development, both in terms of human capital and its

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links to economic growth, but also in its role in promoting social cohesion, citizenship and identity formation. Contemporary international development thinking is heavily framed within a 'Post-Washington Consensus' paradigm that emphasises neoliberal market reforms, institution building and good governance, with a strong emphasis on poverty reduction and national and local ownership of development trajectories (Robertson et al., 2007; Bonal, 2002). The international development sector is strongly rooted in United Nations declarations and treaties, particularly the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 UN International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Contemporary policy objectives are strongly tied to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Delivery of aid is informed by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2000), which seeks to better co-ordinate international development assistance. Within the education sector, international development roots its work in all of the above declarations, but also in the framing of the Education For All objectives, signed in Jomtien in 1990, aspects of which were embedded within MDGs 2 and 3 (universal primary education and gender equity). In 2012, the importance of education was further enhanced with the creation of the Global Education First Initiative, a five-year initiative sponsored by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to promote access, quality and the fostering of global citizenship (Novelli, 2012; Winthrop and Matsui, 2013).

### Humanitarian sector

The humanitarian sector focuses primarily on life-saving interventions during periods of natural and complex crises, including wars. Humanitarian agencies, NGOs and Aid workers are central to this approach, which emphasises preparedness, rapid response and delivery of life-sustaining services in the midst of crises. National governments in the particular crises are often unable to respond, and therefore much of humanitarian engagement is delivered from and by outside actors. The sector derives its mandate and codes of conduct from international humanitarian and refugee law, and emphasises principles of impartiality and neutrality in its engagement in complex crises. In 2006, education was added to the cluster system, which was set up to co-ordinate inter-agency responses to humanitarian crises. Despite education's inclusion, it remains a marginal component in humanitarian response, and this is reflected in funding. Between 2001 and 2010, education accounted for only 4.1 per cent of all humanitarian funding requests, but only received 2.4 per cent of the actual funding. Within the education sector, key global actors are the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE) and more recently the Global Coalition for the Protection of Education from Attack (GCPEA) (Novelli, 2012; Winthrop and Matsui, 2013).

### Security sector

This sector is centrally concerned with peacebuilding, state building and global security. Led by conflict and security specialists, the sector focuses on both the analysis and resolution of conflicts, as well as ensuring that conflicts do not re-emerge after peace negotiations. Its operations are strongly informed by the 'Liberal Peace' approach to post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation, discussed earlier under the 'security-first agenda', and some of the key actors in the sector include the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which is a pooled fund aimed at providing rapid funding to support peacebuilding objectives. NATO is also strongly involved in this area, along with the respective national military and foreign office actors of major donors. The sector's practices are informed by a wide range of principles, including: the Fragile States Principles (2007); the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship (2003); the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) (centrally focused on donor co-ordination and support in conflict contexts); the Dili Declaration (2010) (strongly focused on peacebuilding and state building) and the Monrovia Roadmap (2011)

(which established an agreement on the five peacebuilding and state-building goals: legitimate politics, security, justice, economic foundations, and revenues and services); and finally and most recently, the New Deal for Engagement with Fragile States (2011) (Novelli, 2012; Winthrop and Matsui, 2013). Education has not to date been well integrated into the peacebuilding and state-building agenda, and educationists often avoid engagement in peacebuilding co-ordination and strategy development, both at global, regional and national levels (Novelli and Smith, 2011); however, there are strong signs both from UNICEF and from the UN Peacebuilding Commission (McCandless, 2011) that education and other social services are open to having a greater role in peacebuilding operations.

### *5.1.7 Section conclusion*

In reflecting on these different mandates and agendas, we can find a range of important tensions that can help us to better understand education's challenges in conflict-affected contexts. Firstly, while education has firm and established recognition in international development strategy, it has weaker links with and inroads into both the humanitarian and the security sectors. In conflict-affected contexts, it is precisely these two sectors that dominate, thus maintaining education's marginalisation therein. Secondly, this is not just a question of mandate and expertise, it also to do with power. As we have seen, the security sector links powerful military and foreign office sectors which often trump development and humanitarian actors in both national domestic politics and international activities. Thirdly, while education has clearly been marginalised in the 'security first' 'liberal peace' agenda in post-conflict construction, this is being challenged. Central to this challenge is that this agenda, while having some success in maintaining a negative peace, appears to be less successful in addressing some of the more structural inequalities that underpin resentment and anger that can fuel conflict. Issues around economic and social justice are central to these arguments, and improving education provision appears as a key demand. Thus there is a way in for leveraging funds if education experts are better able to demonstrate the long- and short-term security benefits of education's role in peacebuilding. However, there are dangers in leveraging funding from the security sector -this might shift education programming towards more short-term and security-oriented programmes and interventions that might have less transformatory potential. Afghanistan might give us some insights into the dangers and challenges of this (Novelli, 2010). Fourthly, the evidence points towards education sector specialists being absent from the table during these broader peacebuilding co-ordination processes, which reinforces the sector's marginalisation. Furthermore, if researchers and practitioners are not aware of the bigger picture beyond the particularities of delivering education in conflict and post-conflict situations, or avoid addressing them for political expediency, they may unwittingly become auxiliaries of powerful players with very different agendas.

## **5.2 The political economy of policy formulation**

Policy formulation is the second stage of the policy process and involves the proposal of solutions to the issues already set in the agenda. The literature reviewed provides some insights into the political economy factors that should be taken into account by global and national actors responsible for educational policy formulation in conflict-affected contexts. Political economy analysis can help these actors to better understand what the most effective and implementable educational policies in conflict-affected contexts are. It can also serve to establish the necessary conditions for these policies to be accepted by the legitimate decision-making bodies.

The literature identifies a certain level of disjunction/disconnection between, on the one hand, the education agenda designed by donors and global actors and, on the other, the political economy factors that are shaping educational provision in conflict-affected contexts. This disjunction is undermining the effectiveness of the reforms and putting the

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achievement of educational and peacebuilding goals at risk. Lessons garnered from the literature are discussed in the sections below.

**Table 5.1:** Political economy of policy formulation literature: sorted by issues and countries

Issue	Post-conflict context	References
Neglect of political, social and educational roots of conflict	Nepal	Novelli and Smith, 2011 Pherali et al., 2011 Shields and Rappleye, 2008
Priority to efficiency over equity	Nepal Guatemala Nicaragua El Salvador	Shields and Rappleye, 2008 Gershberg et al., 2009 Poppema, 2009 Gershberg et al., 2005 Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003
Systemic approach to educational change	Nepal Sri Lanka Rwanda Philippines Multi-country synthesis studies	Pherali, 2013 Sørensen, 2008 World Bank, 2004 Baum, 2012 Baland, 2009 Ayyar 1996
Financial dependency and aid conditionality	Nepal Cambodia Somalia	Takala, 1998 Pherali, 2013 Shields and Rappleye, 2008 Toomer et al., 2011 Bennaars, Huda, Mwangi, 1996
National ownership	Somalia Timor-Leste	Bennaars, Huda and Mwangi, 1996 Shah, 2012
State building	Multi-context study Democratic Republic of the Congo	Davies, 2009 Titeca and de Herdt, 2011



### *5.2.1 Disjunction between the global educational agenda and the needs of conflict-affected contexts*

The education agenda for development is constituted on a global scale and around the prioritisation of primary education through EFA and MDG goals and the preference for decentralisation and privatisation policies to meet these targets (Verger, 2012). This agenda is often later mobilised by global actors and donors in different countries without a proper analysis of the specific cultural, political, economic and security factors that condition the demand and effective delivery of education. One of the main insights gained from the literature selected for this review has been the corroboration of the analytical drawbacks of a global policy agenda based on the idea that 'one size fits all', particularly in conflict-affected contexts, where the cost of failure is higher and potentially more dramatic.

As part of the aspiration of universal validity, the global education agenda is framed within technical terms and around issues such as access and quality. This technical definition of education goals does not help to identify and engage with more deep-rooted problems in education, such as social and political exclusion, linguistic repression and discrimination. In many cases, these are precisely the problems that constitute the social and educational roots of conflict (see Novelli and Smith, 2011).

A group of studies focusing on post-conflict Nepal provide good examples of the disjunction between the technical framing of the global educational agenda and the political economy nature of the educational problems in conflict-affected contexts. In terms of political economy analysis, Nepal is the most researched post-conflict country within the literature of this review. In locating the impact of globally defined policies within the multiple, historically rooted and unequal power relations which condition educational provision, these studies offer critical insights into the appropriateness and effectiveness of policies in securing peacebuilding outcomes. One study notes that Nepal's commitments to global educational targets have become 'de facto' national policies (Bhatta, 2011, quoted in Pherali et al., 2011:61). The dominance of global discourses in Nepal is critiqued for having 'limited the range of policy possibilities', which may have included 'a radical redistribution of wealth and privilege' (Shields and Rappleye, 2008: 273). Analysing the adoption of global policies on decentralisation and privatisation in Nepal from a political economy perspective, the studies question the misrecognition of the political roots of educational problems and the appropriateness of the underlying developmental assumptions informing these reforms.

### *5.2.2 Over-prioritisation of efficiency over equity*

The literature reviewed points to the 'rejection of educational policy predicated on economic growth in favour of one that places the issue of education equity paramount' (Shields and Rappleye, 2008: 272). In their analysis of the decentralisation initiatives supported by the World Bank in Nepal, they argue that national commitment to a policy agenda defined and promoted by international aid agencies trumps attention to the continued existence of educational inequalities of 'caste, gender and an immense urban-rural divide' (2008: 266) which precipitated conflict and the Maoist insurgency. While justified by international actors as a means of increasing enrolments, fostering community ownership, improving efficiency, creating educational inclusion and enabling achievement of EFA targets, they argue that 'equity does not appear to have received due attention' (2008: 272). Indeed the authors point out that there is a danger that the implementation of the policy will reproduce the very forms of educational exclusion that generated the grievances that underpinned the outbreak of conflict as 'those communities with sufficient resources will be able to support, manage and sustain their schools at a relatively high level, while poorer communities will not' (Shields and Rappleye, 2008: 272). For the authors, Nepal's operationalisation of a global priority through the Local Government Act

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1999 and its Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and supported through the Community Managed Schooling scheme, managed and funded by the World Bank, amounts to a decontextualisation of education within globally driven policy and programming which fail to tackle historically rooted 'exclusionary practices' (2008:265). At stake in this eclipsing of attention to educational inequities - and their implications for the continuation of socio-political inequities - is the possibility of a renewed outbreak of conflict.

Similar conclusions were drawn from the literature on efficiency-driven decentralisation reforms supported by the World Bank in Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras). Such reforms delegated managerial responsibilities, such as hiring and firing and allocation of school-level resources to organised community members or local school councils in an attempt to strengthen what is termed 'client power'. One of the main assumptions of the reform was that increasing teachers' accountability through 'client power' would improve the quality of teaching and learning. As Gershberg et al. (2009) showed for the case of Guatemala, the lower salaries of the teachers in the programme downgraded their social status and produced high turnover rates among them. The evaluations of the reform in El Salvador could not prove any significant impact on improving school quality and internal efficiency and encouraging community participation, especially the kind of participation that may have an effect on the actual learning process within the school (Reimers, 1997 quoted by Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003). In a context of extreme social inequalities and political tension, the neoliberal decentralisation reforms in Central America worsened the working conditions of teachers (Gershberg et al., 2009), increased the material inequalities between communities and schools (Gershberg and Meade, 2007; Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003) and marginalised pre-existing movements of popular and indigenous education (Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003).

The commitment to the goals stipulated in global agendas as the primary measure of success inevitably leads to a narrow understanding of the needs and array of interventions available in conflict-affected contexts. For instance Pherali (2013:51), in relation to peacebuilding in Nepal after the 2006 Peace Agreement, points out 'the dangers of too much of a focus on specific targets at the expense of other aspects of the system'. The study encourages development partners to promote educational interventions informed by 'systemic' attention to structural drivers of conflict as opposed to a fragmented focus on a menu of technical issues, in order to achieve sustainable changes to inequitable educational provision.

One ethnographic study on citizenship education curriculum reform in Sri Lanka highlighted the limitations of isolated and disconnected interventions within the unequal structures of political and social power existing in conflict-affected contexts. Evidence from informants - including teachers and schoolchildren from Tamil-medium minority schools - suggested that the emphasis on human rights and equal citizenship bypassed what mattered to them, which was their experience of discrimination in relation to governmental allocation of resources, including buildings, equipment, teachers and facilities. The author notes that 'even though many of my informants at some point mentioned the need to better accommodate the histories, values and viewpoints of different communities in school textbooks, they were generally far more concerned with the uneven access to quality education' (Sørensen, 2008:440). Such perceptions registered their experience of the continued operation of political patronage on the basis of ethnic decisions in the distribution of educational resources that favoured the Sinhalese. Drawing on the evidence of the 'social imaginary of the state' evoked by informants, the study highlights the experience of disconnection between their perceptions of exclusion from the national community and neglect by the state, in contrast with the 'abstract' notion of inclusive citizenship embodied in curriculum reform policy. Sørensen (2008:440-441) concludes that curricula reforms relating to citizenship, in order to achieve credibility with their audiences, need to synergise with interventions that address socio-economic and political inequalities.

The prioritisation of universal primary education is a clear example of the narrow understanding of the development goals in the global education agenda for development. Primary education is presented as a universal right and governments are compelled to prioritise education expenditure at this level in order to guarantee universal access. The elimination of fees in primary schools emerges as a direct recommendation from this agenda. While well rooted in justifiable moral commitments, the imposition of this agenda on recipient countries overlooks the actual economic and fiscal restrictions that governments face in conflict-affected contexts. As Baum (2012: 189) points out: ‘the human right to a free education should be deliberated, not as a trump card to supersede local educational obligations but as a guiding principle, placed within problem, solution, and political contexts to assess the current state of education and adequately protect those who need publicly funded schooling the most’. In countries such as Rwanda, given the budget constraints of the ministry of education, the World Bank openly recommends that the expansion of post-primary education should heavily rely on private finance and be subject to the labour market’s capacity to absorb educated job seekers (World Bank, 2004). And this is despite the fact that in Rwanda, at the secondary level, the share of students attending private schools is about 40 percent, which is much higher than the average of 20 percent for low-income Sub-Saharan Africa. As the demand for post-primary education is rising in all these countries, low public sector involvement is challenging the expansion of secondary education and harming equality of educational opportunity between individuals and social groups. In terms of political economy analysis, ‘stylized models which postulate priorities with reference to levels of educational development are no more relevant than deterministic theories of stages of growth’ (Ayyar, 1996:349).

### *5.2.3 Financial dependency and aid conditionality*

The asymmetrical power relations between global and national actors which underpin the adoption of global education policies is repeatedly emphasised within the political economy analysis of policy formulation in conflict-affected contexts. Power inequality between global and national partners and the financial dependence of the latter lead to national adoption of global education policies. Structural adjustment programmes and aid conditionality have become decisive mechanisms to ensure the acceptance of the global policy menu in conflict-affected contexts. A comparative study of four sub-Saharan countries in Africa (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia) found that most of the content of the World Bank and the Jomtien agendas for educational development was reflected in the national policy documents of these countries. It was also obvious that national policies corresponded to the donor agenda to a lesser degree in Namibia, the only country not subjected to SAPs, than in the other three countries (Takala, 1998).

Pherali (2013:61) notes that, after the Jomtien and Dakar world meetings on Education for All, in Nepal there was an ‘increasing use of coercive pressure or conditions on the MoE to ensure conformity to the global framework of action’. Highlighting the lack of country ownership of policy direction created by this imbalance of power, the study notes that the Ministry of Education’s role is ‘limited to the management of aid processes’ and to ‘compliance’ with policies defined by international agencies. Within this picture of the politics of global and national stakeholders underlying educational policy development in Nepal, it is a salutary finding that ‘the notion of mutual co-operation and learning from all actors, including donors and national governments has in reality only become a formality’ (Pherali, 2013: 61). That such marginalisation of significant national policy makers is a cause of frustration is evidenced by one study’s quote from the words of a Finance Minister, Devendra Raj Panday, who criticised donors who were ‘increasingly strident in asserting independent roles in aid recipient states domestic policy processes and conditioning assistance on subscription to preferred strategies and approaches’ (Panday, 2000, quoted in Shields and Rappleye, 2008:273). By scrutinising the relationships of power informing the process of educational interventions in Nepal, such analysis spotlights

the underlying weaknesses of policy development which demoralises and marginalises national actors and as a result leads to a 'neglect of local needs' (Shields and Rappleye, 2008).

Aid conditionality, if appropriately done, should work as a force to strengthen fragile institutions and build capacity by empowering local and national ownership of the education development process. However, the literature selected for this review indicates that aid conditionality is used to impose a particular agenda of reforms, thus diminishing national ownership of educational initiatives (see also Toomer et al., 2011 on Cambodia).

### *5.2.4 National ownership*

Lack of national ownership of educational interventions not only undermines their legitimacy, but also conditions their effectiveness. If national and local actors do not recognise the legitimacy of educational interventions, it is highly improbable that these interventions could be implemented effectively. The low level of engagement of national actors and their possible resistance to the interventions could become a serious barrier to the achievement of the desired goals. The case of Somalia provides a very good example of the importance of national ownership and legitimacy for the feasibility and effectiveness of curriculum reforms. The absence of a Somali central government and the subsequent lack of a central education authority to take responsibility for co-ordinating the education sector left the door open to very independent and unco-ordinated action by NGOs and UN agencies. While curricular changes are normally initiated by a legitimate government, in Somalia, neither UNESCO nor UNICEF could assist in the production of a new curriculum (Bennaars et al., 1996). As a new curriculum reflects national policies, and international agencies need the mandate of an internationally recognised government, the lack of a national political body able to legitimate the reforms made their implementation impossible.

Donors' pressure on national governments for quick delivery also makes national ownership of interventions difficult. In the case of Timor-Leste, national ownership of curriculum change was diminished by the relationship between international donors and the Ministry of Education (MoE), which was pressured to implement numerous projects which undermined its capacity to 'both co-ordinate and take ownership of reform initiatives' (Shah, 2012:34). The study indicates that international pressure for curricular reform coincided with weak governance capacity within a post-independence state apparatus characterised by a lack of fiscal and human resource capacity and technical expertise, the monopoly of decision making by a small elite and an unwillingness to consult on its decisions. Ministry documents cited in the study indicated that the national government recognised its own limitations in terms of its ability to embed the new curriculum in the system or to support its operation by teachers in the classroom. The weaknesses of governance were exacerbated by 'ungovernable and unpredictable flows of donor assistance to the education sector, which overwhelmed the government's capacity to engage in effective service delivery' (ibid: 34). As a result of these governance failings there was insufficient public consultation on the curriculum so that it lacked the necessary ownership and legitimacy of civil society, ultimately creating alienation between the state and its citizens.

### *5.2.5 State building*

Engaging with governments and institutions from conflict-affected contexts is not an easy task for donors, but capacity development and promoting state building should be a priority for the education sector. Capacity development includes addressing the lack of legitimacy of interventions and institutions, improving the contribution of education to the resolution of the roots causes of conflict, and addressing extreme inequality and weak governance issues reflected in education. In this sense, capacity development may just be about making the game marginally less unfair and marginally more transparent (Davies,

2009:15). A vicious circle occurs when the state provides an education system in which people have lost faith, and in turn, the education system is powerless to bring about change in the political system. The challenging task therefore is to create a more virtuous circle, in which education can change the workings of the fragile state and in turn or simultaneously, the state can bolster its legitimacy by providing mass education that can actually deliver what it promises.

Although state building and capacity development should be part of the strategic objectives of educational interventions, it is also true that, while symbolic power is in the hands of the state, often de facto material and organisational power can be in the hands of both international and local non-state actors. Rules do not stem from the law but from pragmatic negotiations. Therefore, the state has to include all the actors with power in the decision-making process, otherwise decisions will not have any effect. On the other hand, the balance of forces between actors is unequal and the negotiation process usually takes place in informal settings that are not transparent, which marginalises the least powerful and disadvantaged groups. De Herdt and Titeca (2011), in work on the Democratic Republic of Congo, demonstrate the limitations of educational interventions that do not include all relevant actors in the policy formulation process and are not based on the political economy analysis of these actors. State representatives in the subdivision of Masimanimba sought contributions from the parents in order to construct new buildings for the inspection service. They obliged the schools to contribute to this, and the inspectors made sure this happened. The Catholic network, however, refused to contribute, allegedly because they were not consulted beforehand, and because they were not present in the management committee handling the funds. As the Catholic network is the biggest network in the area (60 percent of the public schools are Catholic), the project could not succeed and no Catholic schools were allowed to contribute. This situation was not solved until a new regional administrator arrived in the area. This time the management committee was composed of all major actors in the sector, including the representatives of the Catholic Church (Titeca and de Herdt, 2011: 227-228).

### *5.2.6 Section conclusion*

This section has outlined the political economy insights for more effective and legitimate educational policy formulation in conflict-affected contexts. Effective educational interventions should be based on the identification of the political roots of conflict and not just on the technical definition of policy goals. This technical definition of education goals does not help to identify and engage with the problems that constitute the social and educational causes of conflict. Policy formulation should give priority to equity over efficiency concerns in the design and selection of interventions and reforms because the lack of attention to educational and socio-political inequities can create the possibility of a renewed outbreak of conflict. Policy formulation should also go beyond the rights-based approach that dominates the EFA and MDG agenda, adopting a systemic and multisectoral approach to the resolution of educational problems, in order to tackle the economic and political barriers that impede the realisation of these rights. Fragmented and isolated educational interventions cannot become triggers of social change and national unity if they are not part of a more systemic strategy. Legitimate educational interventions should not be imposed on recipient countries through aid conditionality and should allow country ownership of the policy reforms. National ownership and legitimacy of policy formulation are necessary conditions for a successful adoption and implementation of the reforms. These reforms should focus on long-term objectives and contribute to state building and capacity development in the decision-making process.

### **5.3 The political economy of policy implementation**

This section provides an analysis of some of the insights into the political economy factors which research has found to mediate and condition the implementation of interventions in

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post-conflict contexts. It provides an overview of key findings that emerge from the body of literature identified for in-depth review. The studies provide practical insights into the national context-specific processes - cultural, political, social - within which global policy prescriptions play out. In exploring how educational interventions intersect with political economy contexts, they offer a range of useful messages related to the unintended consequences, the success of initiatives in relation to peacebuilding aims, and the potential of programming effectiveness to be enhanced by greater responsiveness to context, including strategic attention to persistent drivers of conflict within post-conflict settings. Multi-stranded in their approaches, and reflecting different components of political economy analysis, the studies are underlined by a critique of educationist approaches that disembed educational policy making and provision from the structures and power dynamics revealed within political economy analysis. The studies therefore yield relevant findings that respond to the need expressed in a recent review of the role of basic education in post-conflict recovery for the development of 'conflict sensitive policies and interventions to improve educational outcomes that are responsive to national, regional and local conditions' (Barakat et al., 2013: 139).

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 summarise the countries and issues referred to in the text and also indicate relevant references.

**Table 5.2:** The political economy of policy implementation literature: sorted by countries and issues analysed

Conflict-affected country	Issues analysed	Studies
Afghanistan	Disability and inclusion National/local cultural attitudes Education and religion	Trani et al., 2012 Trani et al., 2011 Giustozzi and Franco, 2011
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Education systems/actors and peace agreements/curriculum reform/agency of teachers Role of national elites Implementation of decentralisation initiatives	Magill, 2010  Komatsu, 2012
Cambodia	Disability and inclusion Role of national elites  Engagement with local cultural values Curriculum reform	Kalyanpur, 2011 Tan, 2008; Toomer et al., 2011 Tan 2008 Tan, 2008 Toomer et al., 2011
Darfur	Disability and inclusion	Trani et al., 2011
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Education and national/local micro-politics Local cultural attitudes	De Herdt et al., 2012 Titeca and De Herdt, 2011

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Conflict-affected country	Issues analysed	Studies
Guatemala	Education systems/actors and peace agreements Role of national elites Impact of decentralisation initiatives, especially on teachers' agency	Poppema, 2009  Gershberg et al., 2009
Iraq	Marginalisation of teachers' agency	Vongalis-Macrow, 2005
Multi-country	Capacity building	Davies, 2009, 2011
Nepal	Education and ethnicity/ nation building/ social cohesion/curriculum reform Role of national elites National/local cultural attitudes Appropriate modes of engagement to leverage educational change	Pherali and Garratt, 2014  Pherali, 2013 Pherali & Garratt, 2014  Pherali et al., 2011
Kano, Northern Nigeria	Curriculum reform of Islamic schools Local cultural attitudes	Bano, 2009b
Pakistan	Gender inequity National cultural attitudes Role of religion in the political economy of educational change Engaging with Islamic faith based organisations	Bano, 2009a, 2011 Winthrop and Graff, 2010
Rwanda	Disability and inclusion National/local cultural attitudes	Karangwa et al., 2010 Kalyanpur, 2011
Sierra Leone	Disability and inclusion Role of national elites Gender inequity National cultural attitudes	Trani et al., 2011 Novelli and Smith, 2011 Maclure and Denov, 2009
South Sudan	Education and ethnicity/ nation building Role of religion in the political economy of education Local cultural attitudes Disability and inclusion	Breidlid, 2013   Trani et al., 2011
Sri Lanka	Role of national elites	Davies, 2012

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Conflict-affected country	Issues analysed	Studies
Timor-Leste	Curriculum reform Nation building	Shah, 2012
Zimbabwe	Appropriate modes of engagement to leverage educational change Role of national elites	CfBT Educational Trust, 2011

**Table 5.3:** The political economy of policy implementation literature: sorted by issues and countries analysed

Issues analysed	Conflict-affected country	Studies
Capacity building	Multi-country findings	Davies, 2009, 2011
Curriculum reform (citizenship and moral education; languages taught; indigenous cultures; reform of Islamic schools )	Cambodia  Nepal Nigeria Timor-Leste Guatemala	Tan, 2008 Toomer et al., 2011 Pherali and Garratt, 2014 Bano, 2009b Shah, 2012 Poppema, 2009
Decentralisation	Guatemala  Bosnia-Herzegovina	Poppema, 2009 Gershberg et al., 2009 Komatsu, 2012
Disability and inclusion	Afghanistan Cambodia Rwanda Sierra Leone, Darfur, South Sudan	Trani et al., 2012 Kalyanpur, 2011 Karangwa et al., 2010 Trani et al., 2011
Educational interventions and national/ local cultural values and attitudes	Afghanistan Rwanda Sierra Leone Pakistan Nigeria Cambodia Sudan Nepal Democratic Republic of the Congo	Trani et al., 2011 Kalyanpur, 2011 Maclure and Denov, 2009 Bano, 2009a 2011 Bano, 2009b Tan, 2008 Breidlid, 2013 Pherali and Garratt, 2014 De Herdt et al., 2012



## The political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts

Issues analysed	Conflict-affected country	Studies
Ethnicity and social cohesion	Nepal South Sudan	Pherali and Garratt, 2014 Breidlid, 2013
Gender inequity	Sierra Leone Pakistan	Maclure and Denov, 2009 Bano, 2009a, 2009b, 2011
Leveraging change within the educational system	Zimbabwe Nepal	CfBT Educational Trust, 2011 Pherali et al., 2011
Micro-politics	Democratic Republic of the Congo	De Herdt et al., 2012 Titeca and De Herdt, 2011
Nation building	Timor-Leste South Sudan Nepal	Shah, 2012 Breidlid, 2013 Pherali, 2013 Pherali and Garratt, 2014 Pherali et al., 2011
National elites (role of and engagement with	Zimbabwe Cambodia Sri Lanka Nepal Guatemala Bosnia-Herzegovina Sierra Leone	CfBT Educational Trust, 2011 Toomer et al., 201: Tan, 2008 Davies, 2012 Pherali, 2013 Poppema, 2009 Magill, 2010 Novelli and Smith, 2011
Peace agreements	Bosnia-Herzegovina Guatemala	Magill, 2010 Poppema, 2009
Role of religion in the political economy of education	Afghanistan South Sudan Pakistan Kano, North Nigeria	Giustozzi and Franco, 2011 Breidlid, 2013 Bano, 2009a, 2011 Winthrop and Graff, 2010 Bano, 2009b,
Teachers' / educational stakeholders' agency	Iraq Guatemala Bosnia-Herzegovina Zimbabwe	Vongalis-Macrow, 2005 Poppema, 2009 Gershberg et al., 2009 Magill, 2010: Komatsu 2012 CfBT Educational Trust, 2011

### *5.3.1 Intersection of education with cultural, religious and socio-economic contexts*

#### Disabilities

A group of studies exploring the implementation of policies aiming to ensure inclusion for disabled children in a number of post-conflict countries draw attention to a tension between aspirations to universalise ‘access for all’ children (through EFA, Millennium Development Goal 2 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and to cultural attitudes and practices that undermine successful implementation. The key conclusion of such studies is that ‘the politics and policies of countries affected by conflict and the humanitarian and development agencies working within them continue to exclude children with disabilities from formal and informal education structures’ (Trani et al., 2011:1187; Trani et al., 2012). Analysis of the implementation of international imperatives within local realities points to a failure to engage with socially embedded values and practices within ‘top down’ approaches that result in the reproduction of existing social exclusions and inequalities (Karangwa et al., 2010; Kalyanpur, 2011; Trani et al., 2011, 2012). For instance, a study of policy implementation in Afghanistan notes that despite the commitment by the Afghan MoE to the inclusive goals of EFA and millions of dollars of international aid, the 2008 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment conducted by the NGO Handicap International shows that only 26 percent of disabled children access primary school (Trani et al., 2012:347). The study critiques the adoption by Afghan policy makers, following the framing of education policy within MDGs and EFAs, of a narrow conception of educational provision which stresses either its economic benefits within human capital theory or its significance as a right within a human rights rationale. The study argues that such a restricted conception of education, as embodied within global policy and enacted by actors overseeing national implementation, has ‘little consideration for social inclusion, justice, individual well being’ through which the ‘multi-dimensional’ needs of disabled children need to be addressed (Trani et al., 2012:358). However, drawing on evidence gathered from a national disability survey of persons with disabilities conducted by Handicap International, the study concludes that ‘negative attitudes and lack of awareness about disabilities were often raised as major barriers to inclusive education’ (Trani et al., 2012:360). This research uncovered a range of perceptions, linked to ethnic and religious beliefs, that undermined the potential of disabled children to access education or be accepted within families or communities. These included the view that children with learning or intellectual disabilities are not able to learn and that people with epilepsy and other congenital disabilities are possessed by evil spirits or are cursed. Perceptions were also gendered, with boys with physical disability usually experiencing higher access because of social norms of acceptability. Parents’ low expectations and a reluctance of teachers to accept disabled children also undermined their integration within formal education. The key message emerging from this study is that inclusive aspirations for disabled children in Afghanistan are being undermined both at the level of policy formulation and national implementation by a failure to ‘tackle the practices and beliefs that lead to persistence of stigma, prejudice and discrimination’ (Trani et al., 2012:360).

A study of the implementation of EFA goals to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in Rwanda reaches similar conclusions (Karangwa et al., 2010) on the challenges of the national operationalising of global policies that do not take account of cultural attitudes and contexts. Characterising the challenges of implementation, the study notes how the ‘Rwandan government aims to build on the many positive features of its own traditional society ... yet it is also under pressure to develop policies in line with international Education for All goals which are necessarily generic and in need of informed interpretation’ (Karangwa et al., 2010:269). Drawing on an ethnographic study of perceptions of disability within different communities in rural and urban contexts and in relatively affluent and economically deprived contexts, the study illuminates both negative and positive attitudes amongst teachers, families and communities which impact

on the implementation of aspirations for the educational inclusion of marginalised groups. While noting the relevance of infrastructural barriers to the poor school attendance of children with disabilities, the study also found evidence of pervasive discriminatory perceptions involving the use of a dehumanising language of ‘objects’ to refer to disabled individuals who were deemed, because of their disability, to have diminished functioning and therefore low status within the family and community. The study also points out that ‘one of the barriers to the development of a language of practice in Rwanda is the difficulty with the term “inclusive education” which cannot be translated into Kinyarwanda’ (Karangwa et al., 2010:275). For teachers interviewed, the terms ‘non-exclusionary education’ or ‘education that suits all’ were ‘contextually more meaningful’. However, the study also highlights the traditions of extended family bonds and a high level of community solidarity in Rwandan communities, which benefited children with disabilities growing up in income-poor households in poorer communities. Thus the study challenges the commonly held view that stigma is more common in communities where poverty is widespread, finding, on the contrary that ‘families with the least financial resources were more likely to be supportive’ (Karangwa et al., 2010:275) and include family members with disabilities in family activities. A key argument of this study then is the need for policy and its implementation ‘to be sensitive to cultural perceptions of disability and education’ (Karangwa et al., 2010:276). Such cultural sensitivity would enable policy implementation both to capitalise on community-based practices that promote inclusion, while also challenging those that undermine inclusion and dehumanise people with disabilities.

### Gender inequities

A study of the implementation of policies to rectify gender inequities in Sierra Leone also highlights the importance of engaging with and indeed challenging cultural attitudes and practices within a patriarchal society to enhance their effectiveness as vehicles of social change (Maclure and Denov, 2009). The study notes that policy-making frameworks, both international and national, have been centred on ‘reconstruction’ and the expansion of girls’ access to schooling as a priority of educational reconstruction. The study recognises the success of such initiatives in expanding female enrolment rates; thus between 2001 and 2004, the number of children attending primary school doubled, rising from an estimated 650,000 to 1.3 million, with girls accounting for 45 percent of all primary school enrolments. Yet the prioritisation of access and quantitative targets, including the number of schools built, teachers hired and students enrolled, is ‘unlikely to foster the rectification of entrenched gender disparities’ (Maclure and Denov, 2009:613). The study draws attention to the limitations of such narrowly target-driven educational interventions alone in transforming gender relations, given the persistence of ‘deep seated socio-cultural constraints which exist both within education and in the wider social contexts impacting on educational structures and procedures’ (2009: 613). On the one hand, the study draws attention to the neglect of curricular reforms to integrate domestic violence and discrimination against women, as well as the reform of teacher training, to ensure the promotion of gender equity through classroom teaching and learning. On the other hand, the predominantly patriarchal arrangements that infuse social, economic and political relations throughout Sierra Leone, as well as continuing widespread violence against women and girls in and outside of classrooms, are emphasised. Moreover, the fragility of Sierra Leone’s economy means a lack of job opportunities for youth, which will impact more negatively on girls than boys ‘given the interconnections between the scramble for work and the prevalence of patriarchal power relations’ (2009: 617). . This analysis thus spotlights the lost potential for education to be a transformational social force that might contribute to enhancing the lives and opportunities for girls within policies and implementation strategies which, in prioritising the attainment of quantitative targets, fail to engage with the wider contexts of disempowerment impinging on their welfare. In highlighting a disjunction between the aspiration of educational programming towards

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gender equality and a failure to address structural labour market issues that undermine the employment opportunities and therefore the life chances of women, this study corroborates calls for a more systemic and cross-sectoral approach, which is a recurring theme (see Davies, 2011) in this report. Such a programming strategy would, in the case of interventions to address gender inequities, involve partnerships with government departments dealing with employment and economic development issues, as well as government commissions dealing with human rights and youth.

Adopting a contrasting perspective, other studies of interventions to address gender inequities draw attention to the dangers of privileging Western-centric conceptions of gender equity, thus failing to win support and reducing effectiveness in securing change and empowerment (Bano, 2009a). A study drawing on interviews of 100 students in female madrasas from four provincial capitals of Pakistan highlights the appeal of conceptions of the well-being of womanhood which contrast with those promoted by leaders of NGOs supporting female empowerment and backed by Western development agencies. While the latter argues for 'individual liberty, including sexual liberty and the involvement of women in economic and political activity', the former 'promoted a different notion of female well being, arguing that a woman's interests are best served in a stable family unit' (Bano, 2009a:13/14). The author emphasises that the commitment of students in female madrasas to women's role as homemakers and their related rejection of aspirations to economic independence and sexual liberation was grounded in a vigorous belief in the 'superiority of Islamic beliefs for women's actual well being' (2009a: 12). Moreover, their decision making processes and preferences were rooted in a self-interested and pragmatic 'means-end' rationality which viewed the pursuit of economic and sexual independence as threatening the stability of family structures, from which they derived their security and wellbeing. In relation to enhancing the effectiveness of interventions to secure women's empowerment, the author draws the conclusion that 'these local conceptions of womanhood - being more sensitive to local realities - are more conducive to negotiating space for change for women from within the system than are ideas of Western feminism promoted from abroad' (Bano, 2009:19). The study thus emphasises the importance of understanding and engaging with context-specific models of gender equity and empowerment rather than privileging less culturally attuned Western models and adopting a doctrinaire approach, thereby foreclosing the opportunity to forge potentially constructive alliances and dialogue.

### Curriculum reform, nation building, ethnicity and social cohesion

The need for culture-sensitive approaches to the implementation of educational interventions is also apparent in analysis of curriculum reform in post-conflict contexts. For example, a study of the introduction of civic and moral education in Cambodian schools (Tan, 2008) highlights the tension between a 'modern view of education promoted by the Cambodian government and external donor agencies and traditional views of education rooted in Cambodia's history and values' (Tan, 2008: 560; see also Toomer et al., 2011). A review of the MoE's curriculum documents identifies content which includes 'democracy, election, human rights and freedom as well as the inculcation in students of a "strong belief in being responsible for their own future" and a commitment to "active citizenship"' (Tan, 2008: 562). The author concludes that 'the aims and contents of civic and moral education in Cambodia today reflect the country's adoption of liberal democracy based on market economic practices' (Tan, 2008:562). However, the study argues that the lack of a conducive political and social culture undermines the capacity of Cambodian students to internalise and apply what they have learned. For example, there is a tension between Western instrumental models of the exercise of individual rights to leverage social change and the apolitical concept of individuality in the prevalent Buddhist philosophy in Cambodia, which stresses spiritual growth and passivity in the face of justice and suffering. Moreover, the curriculum's injunction to exercise active citizenship is in tension with a political culture that operates around patronage networks that outlaw

opposition. For the author, these tensions reflect a fundamental conflict over the purposes of education. On the one hand the MoE, influenced by Western donors, espouses a technocratic view, linked to modernisation theories of development, in which the primary purpose of education is the development of human capital for the economic development of Cambodia. On the other hand, a traditional Buddhist understanding of education prioritises spiritual and moral development. Noting how the government's curriculum agenda is 'besotted with tensions and challenges', the study recommends a 'greater involvement of religious groups and community-based associations in peace-building and education' in order to promote a 'more culturally appropriate conceptualisation of education' (Tan, 2008: 569).

Some studies, attentive to the mentality of individuals and communities in post-conflict contexts, offer insights into the cultural and religious values within which educational aspirations are rooted, with important practical implications for the nature and effectiveness of educational interventions as vehicles of peacebuilding and social cohesion (Breidlid, 2013). Thus an analysis of the role of education in Sudan's civil war distinguishes between the educational discourse of the Sudanese government - committed to framing the primary school curriculum within an Islamist ideology that suppresses recognition of the country's ethnic diversity - and that of the Sudan People's Liberation army, which resisted such an homogenising enterprise and developed a more secular, modernist, education policy, committed to Western epistemology and science in the areas of the South under its control. Here educational values espoused by those who took up arms against the Northern Islamist government were in counterpoint with a counter-hegemonic political discourse developed in opposition to the non-secular, fundamentalist policies and practices of the North. However the author emphasises that this commitment to a modernist discourse of education in the South repressed recognition of indigenous knowledges and cultural practices of different ethnic groups in the process of defining a southern Sudanese identity. The challenge of the new South Sudanese independent state will be to foster inter-tribal reconciliation and a cohesive national identity based on a 'new national narrative ... one that cuts across the various ethnic groups as well as the competing knowledge systems of the South' (Breidlid, 2013:44). This is a challenge in which the education system will have a key role. Based on qualitative research with 100 informants between 2002 and 2004, this study highlights the pivotal contribution of educational values to the formation of community and national identity, elucidating the potential of educational reform to contribute to the complex societal challenges facing emergent post-conflict states.

The intersection of educational reform, post-conflict nation building, ethnic diversity and identity formation are also addressed in a study of Nepal (Pherali and Garratt, 2014). It focuses on post-Peace Accord transitional politics since 2006 in which the government has sought to establish a universally recognised Nepali identity through the imposition of an official national language, Nepali. The study notes that 'the policy to adopt Nepali as the only official language across all spheres of life, has come at the cost of cleansing particular ethnic groups of their indigenous languages and often precious cultural identities' (Pherali and Garratt, 2014:46). Given the fact that Nepal is home to over 100 ethnic and more than 70 linguistic communities, this language policy, the authors argue, amounts to state sponsored linguistic coercion supported by 'high caste elite groups' (Pherali and Garratt, 2014:43). Drawing on data collected through interviews with educational stakeholders across the country, the study reports that the dominant view among ethnic and indigenous nationalities is that this is an act of 'symbolic violence' by the state, under the rule and influence of high caste elite groups. Indeed, referring to the sentiments of teachers and students interviewed, the author notes that 'ethnic identity' was put before national identity (Pherali and Garratt, 2014:47). The sustainability and effectiveness of the project as a vehicle of social cohesion is thus undermined by its alienation of the very constituencies - downtrodden castes and unjustly marginalised

ethnic groups - who supported the Maoist insurgency leading to the civil conflict. The alarming rise of ethnic politics since the Peace Accord of 2006 indicates the frustrations generated by the regime's commitment to an exclusive model of Nepalese national identity for marginalised constituencies, whose recognition and integration is essential for social and political stability. The post-2006 explosion in demand for more equitable social and political representation from various castes, and ethnic and political groups, as well as efforts to revive and promote indigenous languages, attest to their continued struggle for recognition and representation. Within such struggles, the nature of the content of education is inseparable from socio-political realities impinging on the identity affiliation of multiple constituencies in Nepalese society. Characterising the post-conflict 'identity' crisis in Nepal, the author notes that 'politicians and ordinary people have a major challenge to avoid intra-state and inter-state conflict on matters of ethnic and cultural identity' (Pherali and Garratt, 2014:49). In addressing such challenges, the author emphasises the relevance of an expansive rather than a narrow notion of education as 'a process of identity formation and linguistic acquisition' and as a vehicle through which the legacy of ethnic, linguistic and caste marginalisation in the country may be addressed.

### Intersection of education with religion

That the intersection of religious attitudes with approaches to education can sometimes be shifting and unpredictable, with important strategic implications for the implementation of education policy, is the key insight of a recent study into the changing attitudes of the Taliban towards (non-religious) state education in Afghanistan from 2001 (Giustozzi and Franco, 2011). The study is based on interviews carried out between December 2010 and March 2011 with a mix of 82 Taliban elders, teachers and informed people in 10 different provinces of Afghanistan. It uncovers motivations for the Taliban's rejection of a policy of violence and destruction of schools between 2006 and 2011; authorisation to attack schools was removed from their Code of Conduct in 2009. Insights yielded by data suggest that the Taliban faced a backlash from villagers who wanted their children to be given the opportunity to attend school and that the change of policy was instigated by a desire to appease villagers and community pressures to maintain services. Understanding such motivations indicates that despite the Taliban's willingness to enter into negotiations with the MoE, they are in reality privileging their relationships with the communities, 'which could bring rewards regardless of the ultimate outcome of political negotiations at the top' (Giustozzi and Franco, 2011:26). By identifying spaces for dialogue, such insights into the micro-politics of the changing configurations of motivations - in which religious values of key actors intersect with political economy factors - may enhance the effectiveness of policy interventions within complex and unpredictable post-conflict environments.

The work of Bano (2009b, 2011; see also footnote 4) on the challenges and potential of developing partnerships with Islamic faith-based organisations (FBOs) - in particular madrasas in Pakistan and Nigeria - is exemplary in offering insights that may enhance strategising to ensure the effectiveness of educational interventions in contexts in which possibilities are constrained or conditioned by religious beliefs and practices. In a recent six-country study of state-led initiatives to form partnerships with madrasas in order to implement curricula modernisation programmes which integrate secular subjects into their programmes of study, Bano identifies and analyses a range of responses from their religious leadership. These vary between confrontational models of relationship in Pakistan and Turkey, co-option by the state in Bangladesh and Egypt and collaborative partnership in Syria and India. Her study usefully illuminates factors which impinge on the willingness of FBOs to co-operate with reforming initiatives. These include financial incentives as well as a strategic caution by development partners against attempting to facilitate too dramatic a shift from the established principles of the faith that FBOs represent. Within this change in management strategy, the introduction of the secular curriculum is promoted and perceived as building on and complementing rather than

superseding the FBO's defining religious ethos. Such an approach functions to create the mutual trust upon which productive partnership depends. Indeed, Bano concludes that the most important factor in enabling successful 'co-productive' partnerships with FBOs is the building of trusting relationships with their leaders. In this light, she warns against unrealistic, potentially counterproductive expectations of a complete secularisation of the madrasa curricula. She warns that 'FBOs sacrifice their popular following if they become too close to the state and are seen to have compromised on their core principles' (Bano, 2011:1286). This approach, both as an operational strategy and a conceptual framework to effect change, emphatically eschews those strands within development discourses, in particular emanating from modernisation theory and neo-modernisation conflict theory (reviewed in Section 2.3), which set modernity in antagonistic opposition to Islamic traditions. Illuminating the processes which underpin a collaborative rather than a confrontational approach, Bano points out that 'like NGOs, FBOs respond to socio-political and economic incentives and enter into a variety of relationships with the state, ranging from co-operation to conflict. The defining feature in building a co-operative relationship is 'the level of trust between the negotiators on the two sides' (Bano, 2011:1273).

Drawing attention to the potential 'flexibility' (Bano, 2011:1274) in interpretations of specific religious beliefs by FBO leaders - a flexibility which may be successfully incentivised and nurtured by development agencies and state governments - Bano's work is a salutary corrective to the negative projection of FBOs within a homogenising, decontextualised and static understanding of the Islamic faith. Indeed, she challenges the assumption that FBOs are assumed to be less conducive to forging partnerships with governments or development organisations than secular NGOs due to their allegiance to specific religious beliefs. Given the particular strengths of FBOs as non-state providers of social services, a strength accruing from their social capital and embeddedness in dense religious and social networks, the benefits of establishing successful partnerships are evident. Bano's findings are obviously resonant and timely, given the current challenges, greatly intensified since 9/11, of developing and implementing educational interventions within Islamic dominated cultures and settings (see also Jones and Peterson, 2011).

The success of a recent programme to integrate secular subjects into the curricula of primary and junior secondary schools in the Muslim dominated region of Kano in Northern Nigeria (Education Support Programme in Nigeria, ESPPIN)<sup>4</sup> - jointly managed by Dfid and the Global Uncertainties Research programme (Economic and Social Research Council)- is testimony to the successful application of the dialogical modes of engagement emphasised by Bano. The goal of the programme has been the development of an integrated system, with equal emphasis on teaching secular and religious subjects, an approach which has won the approval of parents, as well as the state government. Bano notes that the 'success of these interventions in Islamic and Quranic schools can be attributed to the fact that the programme engaged with religious groups and built trust within communities' (quoted in report, May 2013:<http://www.globaluncertainties.org.uk/news-events/improving-education-in-northern-nigeria.aspx>). Moreover, Bano acknowledges that the programme 'kept in mind the needs of Muslim parents and what they demand from schools', and 'is not trying to reduce the importance of religion in education, it is trying to complement it' (ibid, 2013).

In its focus on the intersection of religious motivations with the political economy of education, Bano's work underlines the relevance of cultural political economy analysis in generating insights that may usefully inform realistic programming within highly complex, religiously charged contexts. These insights are grounded in careful probing of the historical trajectories as well as the social, economic and political factors shaping interactions between the state and Islamic organisations and constituencies. They attest

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<sup>4</sup> See also <http://www.globaluncertainties.org.uk/news-events/improving-education-in-northern-nigeria.aspx>

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to the importance of deep contextual understanding to clarify strategic possibilities for successful engagement in contexts where the Islamic religion is a defining factor in individual and collective identities. Notable in Bano's analysis is her foregrounding of recognition of the constitutive societal significance of the sacral as a crucial component of productive engagement and leveraging for educational change. In this way, Bano's findings draw attention to the limitations of the secular frameworks of modernisation and neo-modernisation conflict theory in addressing the contemporary contexts of implementation faced by development agencies.

With similar import, a recent study of the links between education and militancy in Pakistan (Winthrop and Graff, 2010) also draws on political economy analysis to challenge the pervasive association of madrasas with security threats. In seeking to encourage 'security experts and education specialists to engage in a more constructive dialogue concerning what are the most effective strategies for improving conditions in Pakistan' (2010:48), the study echoes Bano in seeking to draw pragmatic insights to enhance the success and context-responsiveness of educational interventions. Articulating an approach to understanding education that precisely resonates with the political economy approaches outlined in this report, the authors advise that 'we must move beyond seeing education as merely a technical process of information dissemination and skills development to seeing how it is and has been employed in shaping social and political agendas, including identity formation and nation building' (2010:6). Applying this mode of analysis, the report highlights a failure to 'carefully examine Pakistan's education landscape', which has led to 'mischaracterizations and oversimplifications of the role of educational institutions in fuelling Pakistani militancy' (Winthrop and Graff, 2010: 9). The study rejects the view that madrasas represent the 'main or only education-related security challenge in Pakistan' (2010:48), which exaggerates the number of madrasas that educate Pakistani children and rests on an unwarranted assumption that enrolment in madrasas increases the likelihood that youth will join militant groups. In shifting attention to the characteristics and weaknesses of Pakistan's education sector as a whole to explain the link between education and militancy (2010:9) - in particular its low quality and inequitable access and the impact of both features in driving frustration and extremism - the study's conclusions emphasise the necessity of a systemic and contextualised approach to education reform, a key message of many other studies reviewed.

### *5.3.2 Intersection of education with political contexts*

#### Peace agreements

Insights into the role of cultural and religious values in mediating educational interventions are complemented by attention to politics and political culture at a range of levels, from macro-political frameworks and cultures to micro-level behaviour and power relationships. Studies of the implementation of educational policies in Bosnia Herzegovina have highlighted the role of peace agreements in creating problematic institutional structures which have rendered the task of educational reform exceptionally challenging. A recent report into education and fragility in Bosnia-Herzegovina critiques the General Framework for Peace created by the Dayton Agreement in 1995, 'which left a chaotic legacy for education, creating an institutionally complex structure that has made the task of educational reform exceptionally challenging' (Magill, 2010:13). By recognising and protecting the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian languages and guaranteeing the right of all children to be educated in their own language, the legalistic parameters created by the Peace Agreement 'meant that each of the three major ethnic groups could justify the continuation of the separate, segregated education in spite of the fact that Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian are mutually intelligible' (Magill, 2013:13). The report highlights the unintended consequences of this framework, which 'paved the way for the use of linguistic arguments to support political motivations for those arguing for separate schooling'. Thus the Framework provided justification for the establishment of 'possibly



the most visible and obvious symbol of politicisation, the phenomenon of ‘two schools under one roof’ (Magill, 2013:13).

In focusing on the intersection of educational implementation in post-conflict settings with political power struggles, other studies offer salutary insights into the underlying politics through which the aspirations and agency of local actors, while affirmed within peace agreements, are subsequently marginalised, with negative implications for the potential of education reform to be a vehicle of social transformation and peacebuilding. For instance, a study of the implementation of the educational aspirations embedded in the 1996 Guatemalan Peace Accords in the subsequent decade analyses the failure to operationalise its commitments to reforming the educational system to redress the historical discrimination and deprivation of indigenous Mayan communities (Poppema, 2009). The study notes that the participation of Mayan groups and the country’s civil society movement in national commissions during the peace process resulted in the inclusion of many of their demands. These included curriculum reform to ensure that its content reflected Mayan identity and cultural diversity, support for Maya community schools and their organisations and expansion of access to educational opportunities for the majority of the population. Such demands, interconnected with issues of recognition, redistribution and parity of participation, signalled the relevance of educational provision to the achievement of social justice for the Maya and other indigenous communities. However, the study charts how a combination of lack of support from the government and a coalition of influential political elites, the armed forces and the mass media, as well as a failure of the international community to collaborate, support and finance indigenous initiatives and organisations, resulted in a failure to implement the proposals. The study concludes that the expectations of the peace agreements for decentralisation of the education system and the participation of indigenous groups in policy making to overcome poverty, exclusion and discrimination as well as social and political marginalisation to achieve social justice and to transform society, have not been realised. This is a depressing narrative then, indicating the power of political economy dynamics to thwart the execution of well-intentioned educational aspirations and the local agency and aspirations of those promoting them.

### *5.3.3 Non-state actors and the micro-political contexts of implementation*

While macro-legal frameworks evidently shape the political landscape within which educational initiatives operate, a key theme in the studies reviewed is also the formative role of micro-level political cultures and dynamics which can condition the effectiveness and success of interventions, and lead to unexpected outcomes (Titeca and de Herdt, 2011; de Herdt et al., 2012; Williams, 2012). Thus studies of donor investment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo draw attention to a failure to engage with context-specific models of statehood conditioning financial flows to schools, which led to unintended outcomes of direct investments of large sums of money in primary schools in order to reduce costs to parents, thereby improving access and participation. The studies draw on field research which finds that ‘there is no evidence that the costs paid by households were reduced’ and indeed that the money invested was syphoned off from the schools to ‘higher administrative levels’ (de Herdt et al., 2012:695). Analysis of this unintended outcome uncovers a failure of the educational intervention to take account of the nature of the state provision of education services in the Congo and related assumptions about the state’s role and of the framework within which the provision of education is financed and operationalised. For example, the studies critique as inappropriate to the political culture of the Congolese post-conflict state the underlying assumption of such investments that aid should be used as a ‘peace dividend’ to strengthen the relationship or ‘social contract’ between the state and its citizens by demonstrating the state’s capacity to deliver public services and thereby to regain its legitimacy (Titeca and de Herdt, 2011:215-219). Such a view of state reconstruction is

predicated on a Weberian notion of the social contract between the state as a coherent entity and its citizens, which ignores the more complex array of actors contributing to the delivery of public services within weak or fragile states such as the Congo. Drawing on the notion of ‘negotiated statehood’ to characterise more precisely Congolese post-conflict political culture, the study draws attention to the operation of multiple actors and institutions acting in the name of the state, whose exercise of power is ‘negotiated’ within a hybrid political order (de Herdt et al., 2012: 682). Thus, state power operates diffusely through a multitude of state and non-state actors and institutions. In the case of the Congo, both during and after the conflict, when the state increasingly withdrew from investment in education, Catholic religious networks were particularly important in contributing to educational provision and meeting the rising demand for access. Within this essentially privatised but nevertheless state-regulated system of educational governance, a complex administrative framework was developed known as ‘ventilation’, whereby fees paid by parents flowed up to higher levels of administration, including district, provincial and national. The operation of this financial distribution system - a system which reflects the distributed nature of state power in the provision of educational services - explains the failure of donor funding flows to achieve their intended goals since the reduction in school-level functioning costs was offset by an increase in the ‘taxes’ to be paid to higher administrative levels, resulting in the increased funding being used not to assist parents but to pay the wage bills of the sector. The study concludes that without taking into account the diffuse nature of political authority in the ‘negotiated’ statehood exercised in the Congo - with its complex administrative systems and importance of local rather than state-centric arrangements - the capacity of donors’ interventions to make an impact on the provision of educational services, and thereby to secure a peace dividend, will be limited.

### *5.3.4 The politics of decentralisation and the agency of educational actors*

Studies of the implementation of decentralisation initiatives in post-conflict contexts bring together some of the threads of political economy insights already examined, highlighting inattention to local contexts and the agency of local actors as factors which undermine the avowed aims of such programmes to empower communities to take greater ownership of educational provision (Welmond, 2002; Carney et al., 2007; Gershberg et al., 2009). A study of the National Community Managed Programme for Educational Development (Pronade) and the Education Development Programme (Proescolar) in Guatemala notes that within the World Bank, Pronade has been referred to as ‘one of the most aggressive decentralisation measures in Latin America, where isolated rural communities have been truly empowered to administer and manage the schools’ (Gershberg et al., 2009:188). A study of the implementation of the programme based on interviews and focus groups with community members and NGO workers involved in two Pronade and two Proescolar schools in four communities; it highlights implementation challenges linked to the decontextualised nature of the expectations of community empowerment framing the policy intervention. Thus, although strengthening ‘client power’ through delegating responsibilities such as the hiring and firing of teachers to community members, the study found that in many isolated rural areas, parents’ ability to manage teachers in this way was limited by their illiteracy and lack of knowledge. The study also notes parents’ limited involvement in modifying the curriculum or calendar or evaluating teachers’ instruction. Paradoxically, given the project’s aim of making teachers more accountable to local communities, the study finds that ‘teachers played a critical role in supporting the administrative function of the local school councils’ (Gershberg et al.2009:194). Other misalignments between policy and context included a time conflict between the administrative needs of the school and the work schedules of parents, as well as a mismatch between the school calendar and the seasonal work patterns of families living in rural areas. However, the study emphasises ‘a failure to adequately consider the particular context and the role of teachers in Guatemalan society’ which ‘appears to have

been the root of some of the problems encountered' (Gershberg et al. 2009:192). Noting that teacher alienation from the reforms is a key threat to their sustainability, the study highlights the lack of involvement of the teacher unions in the development of Pronade and differences in pay and job security between Pronade and other teachers. Such policy-related belittling and marginalisation of teachers was in tension with parental respect for their agentic significance within school communities, not only as teachers but also as administrators and creators of local schools. The study emphasises the need to consider the particular role of the teacher in a given society in order to understand the kind of education reforms that are most likely to work (Welmond, 2002). While yielding insights into political cultures and structures conditioning the implementation of education policy, political economy analysis also spotlights the relevance of engagement with the complex dynamics of individual agency within specific contexts.

Other studies also unravel the underlying politics of the management of post-conflict educational intervention by international agencies which function to marginalise key local agents. For instance, a study of the educational agendas of USAID, the UN and the World Bank in Iraq (Vongalis-Macrow, 2005) highlights the focus of teacher education programmes on the development of technical skills, and a narrowing of their agency as actors concerned for post-conflict social justice and reconstruction. Such curricula implicitly exclude the possibility that teachers may be involved in community rebuilding. The author concludes that the 'identity of educators' is depoliticised within an educational agenda that reconstructs work as removed from history or politics (Vongalis-Macrow, 2005:8).

### *5.3.5 The contested nature of reforms and the agency of national elites*

While this report has demonstrated how many studies draw attention to the asymmetrical power relations pertaining between global and national actors, also highlighted is the autonomous exercise of agency by national elites, and in particular their capacity to resist, redefine and appropriate as well as - if perceived to be in their interests - to collude with the opportunities for educational change created by processes of policy formulation and implementation. At one level, this is deemed to result from the macro-political characteristics of conflict-affected states, which may undermine or thwart any possibilities for change within educational governance. For instance, the title of the report on the political economy of reform in Zimbabwe, *Recovery in Crisis*, draws attention to its key argument that because of the country's currently stalled political transition, 'the best efforts of many well meaning and dedicated persons in the education system and among the development partners' are undermined by a lack of political consensus to permit constructive movement towards change (CfBT Education Trust, 2011: iv). Pointing to these politicised forces of inertia, the report notes that the 'main interest of the bureaucracy is to resist change and support reconstruction only of the system with which they are familiar' (ibid: iv). Within such a context, the very framing of policy initiatives in terms of a language of change is highly problematic, such that the words 'change or reform' are 'unpopular' in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Arts and Culture because of their implied criticism of the current party of government, the Zimbabwean African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and for their association with the political opposition. The challenges of negotiating changes within a political culture that is deeply inimical to reform are also highlighted in a situation analysis of education and fragility in Cambodia. The report points out how attempts to leverage change within education governance have been thwarted by the historical instrumentalisation of the education sector in the service of an authoritarian and centralised, single-party political structure and a rigid social hierarchy in which patron-client relationships work to sustain loyalty to the ruling party (Toomer et al., 2011:14-16), powerfully limiting the space for and opportunity to effect any reforms. The disengagement of elites from the government system and their turn to private education

has further undermined the political will necessary to reform a deeply inequitable system of public education. In understanding such immunity to change, the authors emphasise its deeply rooted cultural dimensions, drawing the conclusion that 'reform efforts often fail to recognize these cultural complexities, leading to efforts that fail to address or even exacerbate the problems they are designed to address' (Toomer et al., 2011:19).

Another aspect of the systemic politicised inertia within conflict-affected states emphasised in some studies is a deliberate lack of political will to effect changes within the frames of reference defined in global agendas. Referring to the implementation of peace education, Save the Children's report into the delivery of education in conflict-affected states notes that 'the language of peace is not necessarily welcome everywhere' (Davies, 2012:34). Thus, 'peace education' or 'education for peace' is not always favoured by governments that wish to attribute blame for conflict on particular (historical) groups, or that see themselves in a post-conflict situation where peace education is not necessary (as in Sri Lanka). Indeed the conflict-related terminology in which global interventions are often conceived is frequently eschewed by national government actors. Such findings attest to the sensitivity of elites to the terminology which frames the peacebuilding policies and programmes of international aid agencies.

The self-interested and highly politicised resistance of elites to more equitable educational policies that may challenge their monopoly of social and political power is also emphasised in some studies. For example, Pherali (2013:61) charts the failure, in post-war Nepal, of attempts to reform an educational system which legitimates the cultural, ethnic and caste-based hierarchies of Nepalese society. He notes that the Ministry of Education's proposed School Sector Reform Plan, 2009-2015 is oblivious to the need for a conflict-sensitive approach to educational reforms (Smith, 2005:377, quoted in Pherali, 2013). Thus the proposals reproduced the dominance of the privileged social groups through the content of the curriculum and language of instruction, effectively ignoring the structural problems and educational inequalities which contributed to the Maoist insurgency.

The analysis of elite behaviour in Guatemala by Poppema also draws attention to their role in thwarting educational policies which aimed to empower indigenous peoples and civil society. Poppema traces the suppression of attempts to implement the educational aspirations of the 1996 Peace Accords by a coalition from the business sector, military commanders, the mass media and members of the government and Ministry of Education. The multicultural and intercultural aspects of the reforms were opposed on the grounds that they threatened national unity, which could only be preserved by 'uniform' and 'universal' educational policies (Poppema, 2009:390). That these same groups co-operated with a parallel education decentralisation programme financed by the World Bank - one which 'put the greatest burden on the shoulders of the poorest and indigenous' (2009:383) - underscores the powerful capacity of national elites to appropriate and co-opt, as well as block the progress of potentially transformative educational policies and programmes in line with their own perceived interests and concerns.

In tracking the highly politicised leverage exercised by national elites to frame the outcomes of educational reforms, Pherali draws the conclusion that 'technical solutions for school effectiveness within policies and programming are likely to be undermined by the contesting political and economic interests in the system' (Pherali, 2013:64). This corroborates the broad findings of the literature reviewed in relation to policy formulation and implementation that highlight a disjunction between the framing of policy and programming within educationist priorities which are disembodied from the political realities and power dynamics of the national contexts of their implementation.

Indeed, some studies have highlighted the paradoxical role of international 'peacebuilding' interventions in entrenching the power and behaviour of political elites, thereby reinforcing the very inequitable social structures which underpinned the grievances leading to conflict. A recent report into peacebuilding in Sierra Leone (Novelli

and Smith, 2011) has observed that the framing of the international intervention within the priorities of liberal peacebuilding, with its security-first approach that privileges stabilisation over social transformation, has led to the 'restoration of the power of the old order ... albeit in more democratic form' (2011:8). Within this model of peacebuilding intervention, the need to address massive social and educational inequalities was sidelined.

Drawing on multi-scalar political economy analysis that explores the relationship between global and national actors, these studies are a salutary reminder of the sometimes counterproductive implications of international interventions in relation to the attitudes and agency of national elites, and in particular their engagement in sustainable peacebuilding processes.

### *5.3.6 Capacity development*

A distinct literature focusing on the challenges of capacity development within the education sector in conflict-affected contexts offers insights that resonate with the findings reviewed on the political economy factors conditioning policy formulation and implementation (Davies, 2009, 2011; Sigsgaard, 2011). Endorsing their recognition of the challenges of engaging with the interconnectedness of educational interventions with political and cultural dynamics, Davies notes that 'education is the most complex and politicised sector in which to attempt change because of its ideological basis as well as its function of deciding people's future destinations' (Davies, 2011:158). Also echoing findings from earlier sections. Davies critiques the conceptualisation of capacity development as a matter of filling 'capacity gaps' or seeing people as 'resources' (Davies, 2011:158) rather than agents operating within political and cultural constraints that shape their responses to educational interventions and condition the potential of education to contribute to transformatory peacebuilding goals. Indeed, in arguing for holistic, cross-cutting and context specific approaches to capacity development interventions, Davies' analysis and conclusions are aligned with the political economy messages of the literature reviewed for each moment of the policy cycle. Thus the identification of constituencies with whom to build capacity should transcend narrow state-centric categorisations of fragile states in terms of the causation, types or phases of fragility and embrace 'international or regional phenomena or domestic actors such as the private sector or civil society' (Davies, 2011:160). Davies also identifies the different dimensions of capacity development, which include attention to its individual (level 1), organisational (level 2), customary (level 3) and political dimensions (level 4) that interlock and cannot be treated in isolation. Capacity development builders from outside have tended to stay at levels 1 and 2, focusing on deficits in resources, skills/knowledge and organisation rather than on politics, power and incentives (Brinkerhoff, 2007, quoted in Davies, 2011:165). Emphasising the political dimension of capacity building in fragile states, Davies notes that 'at the very least the political dimension must be taken into account in capacity development planning; at best, capacity development attempts to improve the political environment' (Davies, 2011:167). Such approaches may result in developing strategies to engage with political elites, amongst whom there may be little consensus about the directions and priorities regarding education. In the light of the findings discussed earlier on the capacity of elites to condition the outcomes of programming and policy in constructive as well as counterproductive ways, this advice is particularly apposite. Moreover, applying context-sensitive strategy to capacity building would mean eschewing technical approaches modelled around 'knowledge transfer' to properly recognise its 'recipients' who have 'extensive knowledges, particularly of their work and political context'. Development partners themselves may need capacity development in 'how to understand and work with complex local cultures' (ibid: 168).

Insights into the porous divisions between educational interventions and the cultural and socio-political contexts of individuals and communities in post-conflict societies unfolding

within the studies reviewed are echoed in Davies' conclusion that 'although capacity development is seen to be about systems, it is actually about people and their behaviour'. Thus attention to the motivations and predicaments of local agents is essential for leveraging effective and sustainable change. The recognition that 'people's existing agendas for survival and status, individually and collectively, are key to finding entry points - as well as understanding resistance to change and resistance to being "developed"' (Davies, 2011:176) - underlines the relevance for capacity development of drawing on political economy analysis of the micro-realities of people's lives. At a more structural level, the coherence of context-responsive interventions could be achieved through cross-sector approaches which achieved 'multiplier influence', thereby operationalising the interface between educational and social, political and economic change. Davies cites as an example of such a cross-sectoral framework for educational interventions the 'issues based' approach, already recognised by DFID as a potentially fruitful entry point for leveraging change (ibid: 169). Thus, 'an issue such as peace or equity can be traced at all levels and across all sectors, including teacher education and community development, potentially increasing country ownership' (Davies, 2011: 169). This embedding of educational interventions within broader societal contexts is underpinned by a recognition that effecting sustainable changes results from the 'coalescence' of 'broad alliances across civil society, often supported by media attention and the private sector and linked into reform elements within government'. Context-sensitive capacity building thus requires new modalities of engagement and collaboration between international, national and local actors to jointly address the political economy issues intersecting with education. Thus Davies concludes that 'the work and planning with national and local stakeholders demands honesty and transparency in itself and not denial about institutional cultures, elite capture, corruption, gender disparities and ethnic relations as they intersect with education' (ibid: 176). This advice reiterates the messages of other studies that call for development partners to take the initiative in developing 'honest' dialogue with local stakeholders which does not shy away from addressing systemic and politicised educational issues (Pherali et al., 2011).

### 5.3.7 Section conclusion

Firstly, failure to take into account the location of educational implementation within distinctive cultural and political contexts can undermine effectiveness in achieving aims, as well as result in unintended consequences that jeopardise the capacity of education to be a vehicle of peacebuilding. Secondly, engagement with the intersection of educational interventions with cultural values and socio-political contexts can greatly enhance the potential of education to achieve peacebuilding objectives and contribute to social transformation in post-conflict settings. This is the key to avoiding a narrowly 'educationist' approach in strategising for policy implementation. Thirdly, attention to the contextual constraints, identity, voices and expectations of local agents and constituencies that go beyond state-centric and education-sector-centred approaches are necessary to inform context-sensitive implementation. Fourthly, the effectiveness of interventions depends on building into decision making, awareness of the context-specific political and cultural dynamics into which programmes and policies arrive and take root. Such recognition of the location of educational changes within complex, often highly politicised power relationships can prevent interventions yielding counterproductive results that collude with the reproduction of social injustices.

## 6. Conclusions

In this final chapter, we present our review conclusions. Firstly, we reflect on some of the major findings in the review, grouped around a series of policy-relevant disjunctures. We then present our emergent theory of change – the political economy of education policy challenges in conflict-affected contexts. Finally, we outline the main knowledge and research gaps uncovered by the review.

### 6.1 Political economy disjunctures in need of attention

#### *6.1.1 Mismatch between the global security/peacebuilding agenda and education*

We have clearly found in the review of the literature a disjuncture between the global post-conflict peacebuilding agenda, led by the United Nations and key bilateral agencies and framed in terms of the ‘Liberal Peace Thesis’, and the ‘Global Education Agenda’, broadly supported by a wide range of UN agencies, NGOs and bilateral donors active in the education sector in developing-country contexts, which has a set of commitments around the EFA and MDG education objectives and a list of policy preferences (decentralisation, public-private partnerships, child-centred pedagogy etc.). This disjuncture leads to education being marginalised in the first (peacebuilding agenda), whilst in the second (global education agenda), conflict is not theorised and reflected upon in policy development. On the one hand, this impoverishes the real potential that education has to make a strong contribution to sustainable peacebuilding interventions. On the other, this leads to education policy and programming being disembedded from the broader peacebuilding country approach, and education policies not being thought through in terms of their potential effects on conflict and peace.

#### *6.1.2 Competence disjunction: conflict versus education expertise*

The above point is strongly linked to a second disjuncture that poses a real problem for better integrating education into peacebuilding strategies. Key staff working in the broad area of peacebuilding and conflict, both as policy and practitioners, rarely have sufficient knowledge of education. Similarly, education advisers and practitioners normally have a strong background in education, but little training and confidence in engaging in debates over conflict and peacebuilding and the role of education therein. This leads both communities to remain in silos, and therefore results in missed opportunities of integrating insights from the two sectors, with potentially mutually beneficial outcomes.

#### *6.1.3 Network disjunction between the humanitarian, security and development sectors*

A third related disjuncture is between the humanitarian, development and security sectors, each of which has different logics and agendas that intersect with education in complex ways. While progress has been made in recognising education’s role and potential in the humanitarian phase (during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict), it remains perceived as marginal to the core business of shelter, food and medical attention. This is both an issue of priorities and also timing, with education being seen as a long-term goal, not a short-term imperative. The security sector similarly sees education as a marginal component and something that can wait until later, in the post-conflict development phase. Meanwhile, while the development sector sees education as central to objectives of pro-poor growth, it often remains framed in terms of its economic potential (human capital), while its role in social cohesion is often underplayed. Part of the problem here is that while in the past it was thought that each of these sectors operated in different time frames, increasingly in many conflict-affected contexts, humanitarian, security and development sectors are often operating simultaneously, but as the review finds, not necessarily in a complementary manner. They are also imbued with different power

resources, with the security sector being the most powerful, due to its links to both defence and diplomacy departments. In this scenario, collaboration and better co-ordination might lead to domination by one sector over others.

### *6.1.4 Disjunction between the global education menu and distinctive post-conflict societal needs*

A further disjuncture coming from the literature review is that between the ‘global education agenda’ and the distinctive needs of conflict-affected societies emerging out of conflict. Whilst the education agenda is strongly focused on EFA and MDGs and is influenced by concerns related to economic productivity and efficiency, post-conflict societies may require a much greater focus on education’s potential to address inequalities and to prioritise interventions that favour the promotion of social cohesion and reconciliation. This requires new thinking on what a conflict-sensitive peacebuilding education might look like, and necessarily requires a context-sensitive approach that builds on the specific conflict dynamics of each country and how education might support these broader peacebuilding goals.

### *6.1.5 Educationism - disjunction between education’s transformatory potential and the narrow framing of education policy and programming*

Linked to Section 6.1.4 is a disconnection between the potential of education to contribute to broad societal change and narrowly defined education policies and programmes. As a result of this disjunction, education policy and programmes are sometimes framed within narrow, technical parameters that bypass pivotal peace-related issues in post-conflict societies, including the rectification of social and cultural inequalities and recognition of the identities of marginalised groups.

### *6.1.6 Disjunction between national government departments*

Linked to the previous two points is a disconnection between various government departments (e.g., ministries responsible for justice, youth, gender, employment, land rights) and between these and the education department. This disconnection results in an absence of cross-sector collaboration to leverage change that would address cross-cutting issues in which education is a component of a broader peacebuilding agenda.

### *6.1.7 Disconnection between global policy formulation and local agency*

A recurring message within the literature reviewed points to the failure of ‘state-centric’ approaches by international actors to connect to the agency of local actors within civil society and sub-national contexts. This failure limits or undermines the scope for capitalising on the knowledge and peacebuilding practices of local actors, as well as for responding to their educational needs and aspirations. It also creates a disjuncture between a rigid supply of education and flexible/varied community demands for educational provision.

### *6.1.8 Participation disjunction between global, national and local actors and scales*

Emerging from the review is clear evidence of strong imbalances of power between actors operating at different geographical scales. This is reflected in tensions between agenda setting, national policy formulation and implementation phases of the policy cycle, with a strong sense of global agendas trumping national priorities, and local needs becoming marginalised and sidelined. Realities and priorities appear highly divergent and while we can clearly see and trace global policies filtering downward through the policy cycle, evidence of upward feedback loops, reflecting more bottom-up participation and prioritisation, are less prevalent.



*6.1.9 Theoretical disjuncture between orthodox and critical political economy analysis*

Within the literature reviewed there appear strong tensions between orthodox political economy approaches and more critical political economy approaches, with little ground for communication and synthesis. Orthodox political economy, neoclassical, variants of new institutionalism, modernisation and neoliberalism all view the West as the ‘ideal type’, see problems as endogenous and resistance to orthodoxy as deviance, and where they take culture seriously, see it as an obstacle to progress and something akin to tradition that will eventually wither away. Thus education problems become the fault of ‘poor governance’ and conservative actors in society, and resistance needs to be managed (i.e. teachers unions). This fails to see local, national and global interconnections and is unreflexive to the possibility of flawed policy or the progressive potential of educational reform. Conversely, the critical literatures suffer from an overemphasis on exogenous factors, often demonise international actors, and have a tendency to reify the local, without making sufficient critical analysis of local political processes which can serve to disempower the possibility of progressive educational reform.

*6.1.10 Disjunction between the realities and pragmatic concerns of those in the field and the complexity of the political economy analysis of education*

Despite all the evidence above on the crucial importance of political economy analysis in revealing the complexity of the policy process in conflict-affected contexts, there is clearly a disjuncture between the complexity of social reality - captured to a greater or lesser extent by differing forms of political economy analysis - and the utility of this information for those operating in education as policy makers and practitioners in conflict-affected contexts. Whilst the ‘technical’ nature of education policy can, at least to a large degree, be controlled, many of the political economy factors alluded to in this review seem immensely difficult to overcome and address. However, this study suggests that while difficult to address, these factors are likely to undermine any technical solutions, and therefore political economy analyses can at least help policy makers and practitioners to reflect on pragmatic possibilities or areas where they might be able to make a difference.

Table 6.1 presents each of these key policy disjunctures alongside the respective literature that supports each of the key findings.

Table 6.1: Summary of evidence

Key messages	Key studies (reference)	Relevant policy cycle moment	Conflict-affected context	Nature of educational intervention/issues addressed in studies	Quality of evidence
1. The global security and peacebuilding agenda marginalises the potential of education to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding	Ayyar (1996); Berry (2010); Dolan and Perry (2007); Magill (2010); Novelli (2010); Novelli and Lopes Cardozo (2008); Novelli and Smith (2011); Pherali et al. (2011); Smith (2005); Turrent (2011); Turrent and Oketch (2009); Zakharia (2011)	Agenda setting	Multi-country analysis		High
2. There is a disconnect between peacebuilding and conflict practitioners and education specialists; both groups lack knowledge of each other's fields, leading to silo approaches and missed opportunities	Novelli (2010); Novelli and Smith (2011); Pherali (2013); Pherali and Garratt (2014); Pherali et al. (2011); Smith (2005); Winthrop and Graff (2010)	Agenda setting			High
3. There is a disconnect between actors in the humanitarian, development and security sectors, all of which have different approaches to the role of education	Novelli and Smith (2011); Smith (2005); Zakharia (2011)	Agenda setting			High

## The political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts

Key messages	Key studies (reference)	Relevant policy cycle moment	Conflict-affected context	Nature of educational intervention/issues addressed in studies	Quality of evidence
4. There is a disjunction between a global educational agenda influenced by access/ quality/ efficiency and the peacebuilding needs of conflict-affected societies, e.g. addressing inequity, social cohesion and economic and political exclusion	Ayyar (1996); Cuellar-Marchelli (2003); Gershberg and Meade (2005); Gershberg et al. (2009); Jimenez and Sawada (1999); Kagawa (2005); Kalyanpur (2011); Karangwa et al. (2010); Maclure and Denov (2009); Pherali (2013); Pherali and Garratt (2014); Pherali et al. (2011); Poppema (2009); Shah (2012); Shields and Rappleye (2008); Tan (2008); Trani et al. (2012)	Policy formulation and implementation	Nepal Central America El Salvador Nicaragua Sri Lanka Cambodia Rwanda Afghanistan Sierra Leone Guatemala	Decentralisation Curriculum reform Disability and inclusion Gender inequity National/local cultural attitudes	Medium to High
5. The framing of educational interventions in narrowly educationist technical terms that bypass cultural, political, religious and social contexts of implementation can undermine effectiveness in achieving sustainable peacebuilding aims; and may jeopardise the capacity of education to contribute to peacebuilding.	Bano (2009); Batley and McLoughlin (2010); Baum (2012); Berry (2010); Breidlid (2013); CfBT Educational Trust (2011); Davies (2009, 2011, 2012); De Herdt et al. (2012); Esser (2012); Giustozzi and Franco (2011); Kalyanpur (2011); Karangwa et al. (2010); Komatsu (2012); Little (2010); Maclure and Denov (2009); Magill (2010); Pherali and	Policy formulation and implementation	Bosnia-Herzegovina Cambodia Darfur Democratic Republic of the Congo Guatemala Kano,	Religion in the political economy of education Faith based groups Peace Agreements Nation-building Decentralisation initiatives Disability and inclusion National/local politics National elites	Medium to High

Key messages	Key studies (reference)	Relevant policy cycle moment	Conflict-affected context	Nature of educational intervention/issues addressed in studies	Quality of evidence
	Garratt (2014); Poppema (2009); Shah (2012); Sigsgaard (2011); Sørensen (2008); Tan (2008); Titeca and De Herdt (2011); Trani et al. (2011); Van Wessel and Van Hirtum (2013); Vaux (2011); Winthrop and Graff (2010)		Northern Nigeria Pakistan Sierra Leone Rwanda South Sudan Zimbabwe Nepal	Gender inequity Curriculum reform National/local cultural attitudes	
6. Lack of cross-sector collaboration between the education departments within government and other agencies prevents leveraging change on key cross-cutting issues linked to peacebuilding	Berry (2010); Davies, 2009, 2011, 2012); Novelli and Smith (2011); Pherali and Garratt (2014); World Bank (2005)	Policy formulation and implementation	Multi-country studies Sierra Leone Nepal	Gender inequity Political/economic exclusion of youth	Medium to High
7. Inattention to agency and voices of national/local actors undermines the possibility of sustainable outcomes and of addressing conflict-related social justice issues	Bano (2011); Brannelly and Sullivan-Owomoyela (2009); Breidlid (2013); De Herdt et al. (2012); Esser (2012); Gershberg et al. (2009); Karangwa et al. (2010);	Policy implementation	Iraq Guatemala Nepal Timor-Leste	Teachers, women, indigenous groups, civil society, religious leaders, parents and school communities,	High

## The political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts

Key messages	Key studies (reference)	Relevant policy cycle moment	Conflict-affected context	Nature of educational intervention/issues addressed in studies	Quality of evidence
	Komatsu (2012); Magill (2010); Pherali and Garratt (2014); Poppema (2009); Vongalis-Macrow (2005)		South Sudan Bosnia-Herzegovina Zimbabwe	National elites	
8. Imbalances of power between global, national and local actors undermine the potential for local ownership of interventions and therefore opportunities for sustainable peacebuilding	Baum (2012); Pherali and Garratt (2014); Poppema (2009); Shah (2012); Toomer et al. (2011); Williams (2012)	Policy formulation and implementation	Nepal Cambodia Liberia Timor-Leste	Curriculum reform (language) nation building, ethnicity and social cohesion Role of national elites	High
9. A disjuncture between different types of political economy analysis results in different evaluations of the significance of global and local actors, and local political and cultural contexts	Novelli et al. (2008)	Policy analysis			High
10. The complexity of factors influencing the success of educational interventions revealed by political economy analysis makes them difficult for	CfBT Educational Trust (2011); Davies (2009, 2011); De Herdt et al. (2012); Pherali et al. (2011); Smith	Policy formulation and implementation	Multi-country studies Liberia	Capacity building Politics of leveraging change at levels of national/local governance	High

Key messages	Key studies (reference)	Relevant policy cycle moment	Conflict-affected context	Nature of educational intervention/issues addressed in studies	Quality of evidence
practitioners to address and to use to inform policies and programming. However, failure to do so is likely to undermine technical solutions.	(2005); Williams (2011)		Zimbabwe Nepal Democratic Republic of the Congo		

## 6.2 The political economy of education policy challenges in conflict-affected contexts: a theory of change

Figure 6.1 highlights the theory of change that has emerged from the review. It is grouped around the three policy moments of agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation, and seeks to illuminate the core policy problems, obstacles and opportunities and the desired policy destination for each moment. As the diagram demonstrates, we see the policy process as cyclical and continually in motion. At its heart are political, economic, social and cultural processes that constitute collectively the political economy insights from the review. Running across the diagram are three geographical scales: the global, national and local. These map on to the agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation moments of the policy process and indicate that at each distinct policy moment, actors at certain scales appear more important. It does not, however, imply that other actors from other geographical scales are not present or active in these moments. In reality, geographical scales and actors overlap and are nested together in far more complex ways than the diagram allows for.

### 6.2.1 Agenda setting moment

The literature has revealed that at this moment in the policy process, those working in the field of education in conflict-affected contexts are faced with the following.

#### Core policy problem

A lack of commitment to education's role, either in the humanitarian or post-conflict phase, by a range of peacebuilding actors that set the broader agenda at the global and national level (UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), major bilateral agencies). This is an issue that is both economic and political, with both resource and opportunity limitations, affecting both the quantity and quality of education provision.

#### Obstacles

Embedded in a global and national conflict policy agenda, education advisers need to mediate a difficult route, which comprises of:

- Weak capacity in Ministries of Education, often devastated by the war, and lacking in both technical and financial capacity to manage reform; as a result, donors are often wary of risking investment.
- A liberal peace/security-first post-conflict agenda that sees education as a secondary priority.
- A Diplomacy, Development and Defence agenda that might marginalise donor commitment to development and education in lieu of a focus on short-term security (both donors' and the national population's in conflict contexts) rather than longer-term and sustainable development goals. Resources might emerge from this DDD for education, but might securitise and politicise the education interventions in line with these priorities, risking their credibility.
- A global and national agenda on post-conflict reconstruction that is produced and debated in fora where education specialists are often not present. This is a twin problem. On the one hand conflict and peacebuilding experts are often not well informed of the potential and centrality of education's role in peacebuilding. On the other, education experts are often not well informed on and confident to engage in debates on the role of education in peacebuilding and often do not have the training and knowledge to develop and implement a conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding education strategy.

### Opportunities

- Evidence suggests recognition that the current ‘liberal peace’ post-conflict model requires modification, and key actors (PBC, PBSO, key bilateral agencies) appear ready to explore the possibility of increasing the role of education and health. This represents a conjunctural window of opportunity. More research evidence of education’s contribution to sustainable peacebuilding is needed to take advantage of this opportunity.
- A growing interest in the role of education in peacebuilding and conflict amongst the education community, leading to more engagement with the conflict and peacebuilding community (USAID conflict-sensitive approach; UNICEF peacebuilding, education and advocacy programme).

### Policy direction

There is a need for more commitment and resources to be allocated for quality education interventions both during and after conflict, which can allow for the development of a sustainable and high-quality peacebuilding education system.

#### *6.2.2 Policy formulation moment*

### Core policy problem

A disjuncture between a global education agenda and the needs of post-conflict societies that has two main dimensions:

- Analytical - the content of the education agenda is not sufficiently tailored to the needs and dynamics of conflict-affected contexts, which implies moving from an efficiency paradigm to an equity paradigm. Moreover, the technical and decontextualised framing of educational interventions fails to address deep-rooted structural and systemic challenges driving conflict.
- Legitimacy of the policy-making process. The education policy agenda is often imbued with unequal power relations. The agenda is globally constituted and frequently imposed through non-participatory means, with a notable failure to engage with stakeholders at the sub-national level and key constituencies, including teacher unions.

Both issues have relevance in all contexts beyond those affected by conflict; however, in conflict contexts they have particular resonance and importance, and failure might have more severe consequences.

### Obstacles

- The global education agenda is not context-sensitive and is heavily top-down.
- It is not integrated across other governmental sectors, nor into a broader peacebuilding strategy.
- It is often insensitive to context and does not tailor policies in relation to the particular needs of conflict-affected contexts.
- Global education policies imposed in conflict contexts might have serious unintended outcomes (e.g. decentralisation).
- There are tensions within aid conditionality between short-term objectives and long-term sustainable interventions.
- There is a lack of serious and comprehensive engagement with key stakeholders in a participatory manner - imposition versus ownership.

### Opportunities

- An increase in interest in education and conflict creates potential to develop more conflict-sensitive policy.



## The political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts

- An increasing evidence base can be drawn upon to ensure formulations of educational policy are responsive to political economy contexts, to maximise the role of education in contributing to transformatory social change and peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts.
- Strategies are needed to ensure the participation of local actors and expertise.
- A systemic analysis of the education sector should be ensured, linked to political, economic and social transformations, rather than adopting a piecemeal approach to reform framed in terms of global agendas.

### Policy direction

There needs to be a move from a top-down, non-inclusive agenda to a more inclusive and context-sensitive approach to education policy making in conflict-affected contexts that is integrated into a multi-sectoral approach to national post-conflict peacebuilding.

### *6.2.3 Policy implementation moment*

The literature has revealed an absence of engagement with the cultural, social and political contexts conditioning implementation of educational interventions, a disconnection which undermines their potential to contribute to social transformation and peacebuilding objectives in post-conflict contexts. Attention to the contextual constraints, predicaments, identity and voices of local constituencies that go beyond state-centric approaches are necessary to inform more context-sensitive implementation.

### Core policy problem

The capacity of education practitioners to achieve more context-sensitive implementation is constrained by their obligations to the execution of education interventions, insufficiently tailored to post-conflict contexts, which are formulated at the global and national levels of the policy cycle.

### Obstacles

- Practitioners are disempowered by a currently weak knowledge base and lack of awareness of the intersections between education interventions and the post-conflict social, political and cultural contexts of peacebuilding processes.
- Practitioners are disempowered from developing more context-sensitive interventions by essentially educationist approaches underpinning policy development at global and national levels of the cycle.
- The location of educational changes within complex, often highly politicised power relationships in post-conflict contexts presents challenging environments within which to effect educational change tied to broader socio-political change.
- Actors involved in developing and managing educational interventions have weak capacity to engage with political economy contexts outside educationist specialisms, and actors working within other sectors have weak education expertise.
- National elites can resist change and/or appropriate and undermine educational reform.

### Opportunities

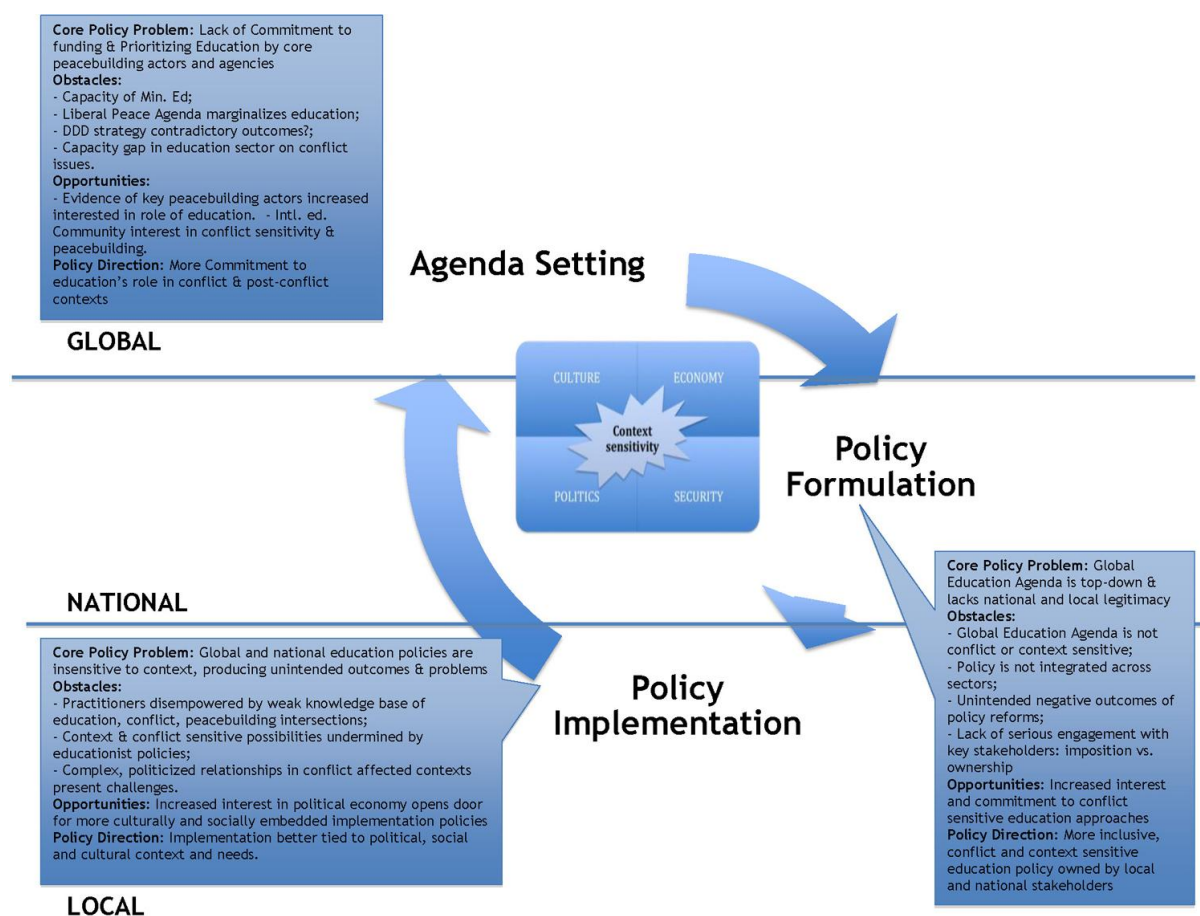
- There is an opportunity to draw upon burgeoning insights into the intersection between education and political, economic, social and cultural issues to enhance strategic decisions, programming content and modes of engagement with local actors and stakeholders.
- There are opportunities to develop strategies to engage local actors more meaningfully in developing implementation strategies.

- There is an opportunity to further develop the evidence base on the intersection between education and political, economic, social and cultural factors in post-conflict settings.
- There is an opportunity for knowledge transfer on issues of the political economy of education between different networks in the field of education and post-conflict development.
- There is an opportunity to develop the capacity of education practitioners to situate their work within political economy contexts.
- There is a need for greater co-operation between actors at different levels of the policy cycle to embed context-sensitivity throughout the policy development and implementation process.
- There is an opportunity to operationalise alternative models of issue-based interventions which aim to locate and integrate education within broad cross-sectoral strategies to effect social, political and economic change in conflict-affected states.

### Policy direction

There is a need for implementation and programming of educational interventions to be better tailored to the political, economic, social and cultural challenges faced within conflict-affected societies and to take account of the political economy context impinging on achieving educational changes that contribute to peacebuilding.

**Figure 6.1: Theory of change**



### 6.3 Areas for future research: knowledge and research gaps

Table 6.2 links the key policy disjunctures with corresponding knowledge and research gaps emerging from the literature.

**Table 6.2:** Knowledge and research gaps

Key policy disjunctures	Political economy knowledge and research gaps
<b>Mismatch between global security/peacebuilding agenda and education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater evidence of education's multifaceted contribution to peacebuilding</li> <li>• Evidence that education interventions can reduce inequalities</li> <li>• Role of social services in promoting a more equitable peacebuilding model</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity disjunction conflict versus education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research needed on the capacity development gap of education practitioners and policy makers in conflict contexts and on how to integrate education into peacebuilding</li> </ul>
<b>Network disjunction between humanitarian, security and development sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research needed on the role and integration of education across the humanitarian, security and development phases (short-, medium-, long-term role). but recognizing overlaps</li> <li>• Research needed on the effects of the DDD strategy on sustainable peacebuilding and education</li> </ul>
<b>Disjunction between the global education menu and distinctive societal post-conflict needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country studies on the political economy/conflict and education relationship in key conflict contexts. Lack of systematic country-level political economy and conflict analysis to establish the education/conflict relationship.</li> <li>• Need to develop a normative framework on what constitutes a socially just education system in conflict affected contexts (security, equity, inclusion, participation)</li> <li>• Effects of education decentralisation in conflict-affected contexts</li> <li>• Effects of education privatisation in conflict-affected contexts</li> <li>• Research on how education can redress inequities and promote social justice (gender, socio-economic, ethnic, religious, political)</li> <li>• Research on the political economy of teacher supply in conflict contexts (ghost teachers; supply of teachers in remote regions)</li> <li>• Research needed on the potential role of teachers' unions in promoting sustainable peacebuilding</li> <li>• Research needed on the potential role of teachers peacebuilding (training, classroom practice, support, role in community)</li> </ul>

<b>Educationism - disjunction between education's transformatory potential and a narrow framing of education policy and programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research on education's integrated contribution peacebuilding objectives (reconciliation, trauma recovery, peace dividend, social cohesion, gender equity, civic empowerment and democracy)</li> <li>• Research on curriculum reform in conflict contexts</li> </ul>
<b>Disjunction between national sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research on coordinating conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding across sectors</li> </ul>
<b>Disconnection between global policy formulation and local agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research needed on education's role peacebuilding and reconstruction from the perspectives of local community stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Participation disjunction between global, national and local actors and scales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action research on inclusive strategies of policy development in education sector in conflict contexts (addressing inequalities of voice and power)</li> </ul>
<b>Theoretical disjuncture between orthodox and critical political economy analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research needed on the potential and limitations of political economy research on education in conflict-affected contexts (specialisms, ideologies, reflexivity)</li> </ul>
<b>Disjunction between realities of those in the field and the complexity of the political economy analysis of education, recognising difficulty of translating knowledge generated into practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More research is needed on assessing the utility of political economy insights and translation into policy action.</li> <li>• Research needed on understanding education actors' perceptions of political economy utility and application in conflict contexts</li> </ul>

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Word threads used for literature searches

### 1. Political economy and governance related

"political economy" OR "structures of power" OR "governance" OR "large scale governance" OR "education\* reform" OR "corruption" OR "strategic planning" OR "politics of education" OR "social capital" OR "accountability" OR "trade union\*" OR "economics of education" OR "principal-agent theory" OR "selective incentives" OR "institutionalism" OR "critical theory" OR "global governance" OR "policy analysis" OR "donor driven aid" OR "development assistance" OR "knowledge economy" OR "securiti\*ation" or "partnership" OR "neoliberalism" OR "civil society" OR "globali\*ation" OR "policy implementation" OR "development aid" OR "political aspects" OR "participatory democratic accountability" OR "PDA"

### 2. Global educational policy reform related language

"policy reform\*" OR "policy paradigm\*" OR "decentrali\*ation" OR "privati\*ation" OR "public-private partnership" OR "school-based management" OR "child-centred pedagogy" OR "school vouchers" OR "conditional cash transfers" OR "curriculum reform" OR "school evaluation" OR "community schools" OR "teacher management" OR "PIMS" OR "capacity building" OR "school autonomy" OR "school-leadership" OR "teacher policy" OR "sector-wide approach" OR "Education for All" OR "Millennium Development Goals" OR "Global Partnership for Education" OR "New deal for fragile states" OR "education\* evaluation"

### 3. Education related language

"teacher training" OR "basic education" OR "vocational education" or "learning outcomes" OR "lifelong learning" OR schooling OR "education\* reform" OR "educational sociology" OR "education\* system\*" OR "schooling" OR "vocational training" OR "education\*policy" OR "quality of education" OR "teacher education" OR "education\* reconstruction" OR "education\* protection"

### 4. Conflict-related language

"conflict-affected state\*" OR "fragile state\*" OR "failed state\*" OR "post-conflict" OR "liberal peacebuilding" OR "post-liberal peacebuilding" OR "civil war" OR "peacebuilding" OR "refugee education" OR "DDR" OR "social conflict\*" OR "education and conflict" OR "education in emergencies"

### 5. Developing country synonyms

"developing countr\*" OR "developing economy" OR "low income countr\*" OR "developing nation" OR "middle income countr\*" OR "third world" OR "emerging economy" OR "transitional economy" OR "global south" OR "underdeveloped countr\*" OR "less developed countr\*" OR "LIC" OR "MIC" OR "transitional nation\*" OR "transitional countr\*" OR "development assistance" OR "low income dependent country" OR "LEDC"

### 6. Study type terms

"systematic review" OR "meta-analysis" OR "meta-review" OR "multi-countr\*" or "large-scale stud\*" or "thematic review" or "thematic stud\*" OR "cross countr\*" OR "scoping review" OR synthesis OR "countr\* stud\*" OR overview OR "literature review" OR "critical review"

**Appendix 2: Record of results of searches on academic databases with final keyword threads**

Table A2.1

Database	Search no. (in saved searches)	Results
Scopus	85	122
ERIC	84	24
Web of Knowledge	11	24
British Education Index /Australian Education Index	3	3
Total		173

These searches all used sections 1-5 of the word threads listed in Appendix 1.



**Appendix 3: Assessment of the quality of individual studies selected for in-depth literature review**

Table A3.1

Study	Validity	Applicability	Reliability	Composite VAR Score
Ayyar, 1996	M	H	H	H-
Baland et al., 2009	H	H	H	H
Bano, 2009	H	H	H	H
Bano, 2011	H	H	H	H
Batley and McLoughlin, 2010	H	H	H	H
Baum, 2012	H	H	H	H
Bennaars et al., 1996	M	H	H	H-
Berry, 2010	H	H	H	H
Branelly and Sullivan-Owomoyela, 2009	H	H	M	H-
Branelly et al., 2009	M	H	M	M+
Breidlid, 2013	H	H	H	H
CFBT Education Trust, 2011	H	H	H	H-
Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003	H	H	H	H
Davies, 2009	H	H	H	H
Davies, 2011	H	H	H	H
Davies, 2012	M	H	H	H-
De Herdt et al., 2012	H	H	H	H
Dolan and Perry, 2007	M	M	M	M
Echessa and Pinnock, 2012	M	M	H	M+
Esser, 2012	H	H	H	H
Gershberg and Meade, 2005	H	H	H	H
Gershberg et al., 2009	H	H	H	H
Giustozzi and Franco, 2011	M	M	M	M
Ishiyama and Breuning, 2012	H	M	M	M+
Jimenez and Sawada, 1999	H	M	M	M+
Kagawa, 2005	H	M	H	M+
Kalyanpur, 2011	H	H	H	H
Karangwa et al., 2010	H	H	H	H
Komatsu, 2012	H	H	H	H

Little, 2010	H	H	H	H
Maclure and Denov, 2009	H	H	H	H
Macpherson, 2011	M	M	M	M
Magill, 2010	H	H	H	H
Maodzwa-Taruvinga and Cross, 2012	M	M	M	M
Millo and Barnett, 2004	H	H	H	H
Montjourides, 2013	M	M	M	M
Novelli, 2010	H	H	H	H
Novelli, 2011	H	H	H	H
Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, 2008	H	H	H	H
Pherali, 2013	H	H	H	H
Pherali and Garratt, 2014	H	H	H	H
Pherali et al., 2011	H	H	H	H
Poirier, 2012	H	H	H	H
Poppema, 2009	H	H	H	H
Ratcliffe and Perry, 2009	H	M	H	H-
Shah, 2012	H	H	H	H
Shields and Rappleye, 2008	H	H	H	H
Sigsgaard, 2009	H	H	H	H
Sigsgaard, 2011	H	H	H	H
Smith, 2005	H	H	H	H
Sørensen, 2008	H	H	H	H
Steer and Wathne, 2010	M	M	M	M
Takala, 1998	H	H	H	H
Tan, 2008	H	H	H	H
Titeca and De Herdt, 2011	H	H	H	H
Toomer et al., 2011	H	H	H	H
Trani et al., 2011	H	H	H	H
Trani et al., 2012	H	H	H	H
Turrent, 2011	M	H	H	H-
Turrent and Oketch, 2009	M	H	H	H-
Van Wessel and Van Hirtum, 2013	H	H	H	H
Vaux, 2011	H	H	H	H

## The political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts

Vongalis-Macrow, 2005	H	H	H	H
Williams, 2011	H	H	H	H
Williams, 2012	H	H	H	H
Winthrop and Graff, 2010	V	H	H	H-
World Bank, 2004	M	M	M	M
World Bank, 2005	M	M	M	M
Zakharia, 2011	H	H	H	H

## **Appendix 4: Authorship, Advisory Board and Acknowledgements**

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